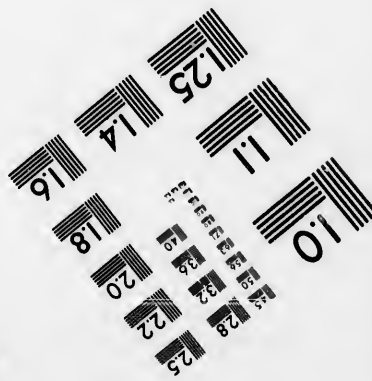
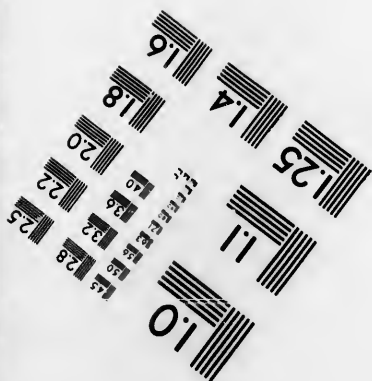
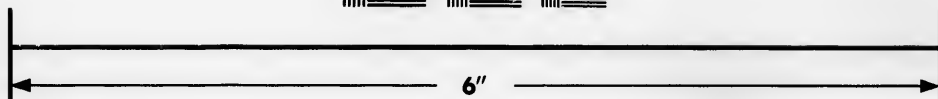
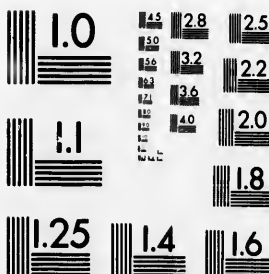


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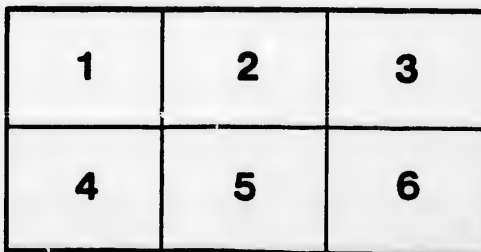
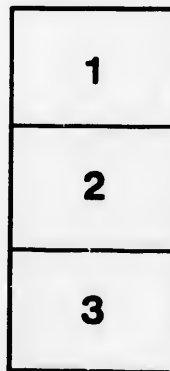
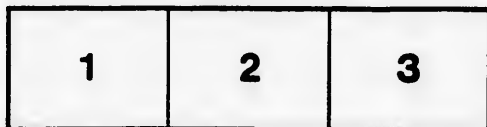
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LETTERS

TO THE

RT. REV. JOHN HUGHES,

ROMAN CATHOLIC BISHOP OF NEW-YORK.

SECOND SERIES.

BY

KIRWAN.

TORONTO:

PRINTED FOR

THE UPPER CANADA TRACT SOCIETY:

DEPOSITORY, 47, YONGE STREET.

1849.

LETTERS

TO THE

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LETTERS

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SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

WASHINGTON

1900

THE NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHIVES

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION

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INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND SERIES.

THE Letters in the New York Observer addressed to Bishop Hughes, under the signature of "Kirwan," produced, as might have been expected, an extraordinary sensation. They were read, not by the Bishop only, nor by Protestants only, but by many in the bosom of the Church of Rome, who were thus led to see the absurdity of much of which they had been taught to believe. One edition followed another in rapid succession: they were translated into the German language, and published for the thousands flocking to our shores and speaking that tongue; they were reprinted in England, and circulated among the Roman Catholics there and in Ireland, with what effect we have yet to learn.

But the Author, in assigning to Bishop Hughes the reasons that prevent his return to the church in which he was born, baptized, and confirmed, had by no means exhausted the catalogue, and he was repeatedly called upon to complete the work.

Of these calls, the following published in the Observer is a fair indication of the estimate in which the

former series was held, and of the public desire that Kirwan would resume his pen :—

To the author of the Letters on Romanism, lately addressed to Bishop Hughes through the New York Observer, over the signature of Kirwan :

SIR,—Though you have chosen hitherto to keep in the shade in reference to the authorship of these letters, I suppose you are not buried in so deep obscurity as not to have some knowledge of what is passing in the world around you. But lest you should chance to be less knowing than might be presumed, I beg to state to you through your own channel of communication, that the letters to which I refer have been read by the religious community at large, with a degree of interest that has rarely been felt in reference to any similar publication. If I mistake not, the judgment of the world is that they are characterized by a simplicity and perspicuity that bring them fairly within the scope of any comprehension; by a force of thought and expression which no reflecting and impartial mind will find it easy to resist; by an amount of good nature and christian charity which must prevent any reasonable opponent from taking offence; and last, though not least, by an unwonted pungency, which is likely, ere this, to have vibrated in a note of terror to the innermost heart of Rome. I believe, in common with a multitude of wiser and better men, that these letters have, as yet, only begun to fulfil their mission; and that those who live at the ends of the earth, and who are destined to live in coming years, will look upon them as having had much to do in lifting from the world one of its heaviest curses.

But my object in addressing you is something more than to inform you of that of which, I dare say, you need no information. You are aware that it is only a portion of the ground of the Romish controversy which your letters have occupied. There are many points of equal moment with those already discussed, which you have left untouched. Allow me to say, yours is the hand to sweep through this whole domain

of error. It would be an occasion of deep regret if you should not carry forward to its completion a work which you have so happily begun. The Christian public expect, may I not say, demand it of you. The multitude who are yet in the same spiritual thralldom from which you have escaped, demand it. Your country, whose political as well as religious interests are threatened with deadly invasion, demands it. The cause of an enlightened Christianity, of a sound and evangelical Protestantism, demand it. There is a requisition upon you, KIRWAN, which I am sure you cannot resist without offending against the mercy that has taken your own feet out of the miry clay, and established your goings. May the Head of the church enable you suitably to appreciate your obligations and responsibilities. Keep in the dark if you will: only lead others into the light of life and into the liberty wherewith Christ makes his disciples free. Be assured that in making these suggestions, I am

ONE OF MANY.

Obedient to these calls, and impelled by a sense of duty to his kinsmen according to the flesh, his countrymen and brethren, he has prepared this second series, in the same courteous and conciliatory style of the former: breathing the same national sympathy with Irishmen, and full of the humour that betrays the author's nativity, while it secures the attention of the reader.

Placed in the hands of those yet in the faith of Bishop Hughes, these letters will be read without prejudice, and followed, as I trust they will be, with the enlightening and convincing Spirit, they will work mightily in opening the eyes of those now wandering in error, and leading them to the knowledge of the truth.

SAMUEL IRENÆUS PRIME.

LETTERS
TO THE
RIGHT REV. JOHN HUGHES,
BISHOP OF NEW-YORK.

—
Second Series.
—

LETTER I.

Reasons for this Second Series—Why, addressed to Bishop Hughes
—Evil days have come upon Popery.

MY DEAR SIR,—When I closed the letters I had the honour of addressing to you during the last spring, I fondly hoped that my part in the thickening controversy on Romanism in our country, had closed also. As these letters formed my first, I designed that they should also form my last appearance before the public on that topic. So I expressed myself to you in my closing letter. But the unexpected “ripple” has been “excited on the current of my feelings,” and whether wise or otherwise, I have concluded again to address you.

My reasons for so doing, and thus departing from my original resolution, are briefly these: The public, who have so kindly received, and so widely circulated my “Letters,” have called for another series, embracing the reasons which I

have omitted to state ; and which, together with those stated, forbid my return to your church. At least one of the papers devoted to the interests of Popery in this country, calls upon me, in a semi-serious manner, to give my views on certain points which it raises, individuals of your communion, who have given my letters a candid perusal, have asked what Kirwan had to say upon this and that point not considered by me ; and last, though not least, is a desire to put into the hands of every inquiring Roman Catholic, a complete manual of my objections to your church, candidly and kindly considered. These, Rev. Sir, are the reasons and motives, and not a love of controversy for its own sake, which induce me again to address you.

While yielding to these reasons and motives, I yet confess to you that I deem the present series of letters, which will be brief, a work of supererogation. If you have never performed such a work, you know what it means. My conviction is that the reasons given in my former letters for refusing to return to your church, are sufficient ; sufficient to induce any sane mind to withhold its faith from your teachings, and every sane man to abandon your church. This, you will say, is a partial decision ; it may be so. But as a tree may be held in its place by a few weak roots after the main ligaments that bound it to the earth are cut, and when the weakest wind

that blows may cause it to totter ; so a mind, when the power of an ancient superstition over it is broken, may yet retain a connexion with it, influenced by reasons which seem unworthy of consideration. I know this to be the case. The belief in "witches and warls" was early impressed on the mind of Hume ; and it is said of him, that, after he reasoned matter and mind out of existence, he could not hear the rustling of a leaf, after dark, without starting as if a witch were upon him. The taste and smell of a sour liquid remain long in the emptied cask. And if any mind, rejecting the great outlines of your system, is yet held to it by some reasons which I have not considered, and whose absurdity I may be able to expose, I feel anxious to relieve it. I must not withhold from you my deep conviction that Popery is an evil tree ; that its fruits are only evil. I believe it to be a falling tree. Its branches are withering in the air, and the axe, wielded by an Almighty hand, is cutting its roots. And if I can assist in cutting a few more of its roots, and thus hastening its fall, I feel that I will be conferring a benefit upon our race, and contributing to the emancipation of millions of men from a slavery, in comparison with which that of the Pharaohs was freedom. Hence these additional letters. And all I intend doing, is to state to you some further reasons which forbid my return to your church.

Before entering upon a statement of these reasons permit me to say a few things which I can better say in this preliminary letter than any where else.

The question has, doubtless, suggested itself to your mind, and to the minds of others, why do I address these letters to you? Some of my reasons I have already given you. I believe you to be a man of sense, of learning, and of fair character, which cannot be said of all papal priests. You are put forth, now that Bishop England, also one of our countrymen, is no more, as the Achilles of your party in these United States. If any man in the country can refute my reasoning and obviate my objections, you can do it. And as my sole object and aim is the truth, I have selected the man, in my opinion, best fitted to correct me when in error; when false, to show me the fallacy of my reasoning,—and if he should reply, who would reply as a scholar and a gentleman. If you cannot confute me, no man of your church in these United States can. Nor will I consent to notice what may be said in the way of reply to, or abuse of these letters by any man, save yourself. I have, as they say, a drawing towards you as an Irishman—I respect your open and manly bearing, and, sadly as, in my opinion, you prostitute your talents, I have a high respect for them. Hence I pass through the ranks of soldiers, and by inferior officers, and go up to Achilles himself.

But you have not answered my former letters! I confess to you, sir, that I had no expectation in writing them, that you would answer them, and for these reasons: First, because they are anonymous. And as I like not myself to contend with a masked opponent, so I judged of you. The text is capable of wide application, "as face answereth to face in water, so the heart of man to man." I prefer, for the present, to stand behind the curtain; and for this, among other reasons, that you and all men may decide upon what I say, simply upon the merits of my statements and arguments; and for the additional reason, to prevent a *personal* controversy. It is an old trick of your church to leave the argument for the man. And, secondly, because of their matter. I speak to you of what my eyes have seen; of what my ears have heard; of what my heart has felt. Facts are stubborn things. How can you make a man believe that to be sweet, which from actual taste he knows to be sour? It is hard to reason against a man's experience. On these grounds I expected from you no reply. And although, unless I mistake you, not one of the little men who seek to put the more abundant honor on the part that lacketh by a mock dignity, by an assumed superiority, yet you know when to be wisely silent. If, sir, without compromising your crosier,—if, during some hours of leisure from your varied and manifold

duties, you would consent to answer some of the reasons and considerations which I have stated, and will state in the following letters, which forbid my return to your church, there is one, at least, that will read your reply with great pleasure. I am not, sir, among those who impute your silence to your inability to reply to my statements; but if I can only gain access to the public ear, if I can only obtain from candid Roman Catholics a careful consideration of what I say, your silence will give but little trouble. My object will be attained.

Permit me to make one other remark before closing this letter. Evil days have come upon the system of which you are so able an advocate. Once you could silence inquiry by church authority; but, in this country especially, that day has passed away. It is passing away even under the shadow of the dome of St. Peter's. There are those, yet, in this country and in the old countries of Europe, who, like that useless bird of sable wing, called the jack-daw, which you and I have seen in our youth, love the narrow window, and the toppling tower, and the mantling ivy, who hover about whatever is ancient, however worthless or truthless; but their number is small, and is daily diminishing. The great inquiry now is after the true, the scriptural, the reasonable. The day for the trial of all things has come. Mere authority in philosophy, in

morals, in religion, is valueless. When man appeals from the Church to the Scriptures, it is of no avail to say to him, "believe the Church." No appeal is admitted from the Scriptures to the Fathers—from the teachings of Paul to the decisions of Councils. Old things, if absurd, are passing away; and their wrinkles only hasten their burial. Nor is there in the physical or moral sciences, nor in the science of government, nor in the theory of religion, a single principle that is not tried and sifted as if never tried before. At this treatment, hoary error may lift up its hands in holy horror, and fall back aghast as did Saul before the ghost of Samuel; but it cannot be helped. There may be, and doubtless is, a reckless speculation—a profane tampering with sacred things; but nothing will eventually suffer but the truthless. And what will become of Popery when proof and Scripture supplant authority and credulity?

It becomes you, then, sir, to buckle on the harness. The battle has but begun between truth and error. In your soul and in mine there should not be a desire but for the triumph of the truth. Let any opinion that I hold be proved unscriptural and unreasonable, and I will cheerfully give it to the hottest furnace you can heat to consume it. Let the truth of God triumph, whatever human systems perish. Will you join me in this aspiration?

In my next I shall proceed with my statement of some of the additional reasons which prevent me from returning to your church.

With great respect yours,

KIRWAN.

LETTER II.

Extreme Unction—Its meaning—The way of administering it—
James v. 14, 15.—It enriches the Church—An Incident.

MY DEAR SIR,—Agreeably to the promise made to you in closing my last letter, I now proceed to a statement of the additional reasons which yet prevent my return to the pale of your church, in which I was born, baptized, and confirmed. I shall begin with your sacrament of *Extreme Unction*. As but few of your own people, and yet fewer Protestants, understand it, I hope you and my readers will bear with me even if I should occupy this letter with its consideration. When rightly understood it is a terrible sacrament. I will strive so to explain it as to bring it to the level of every mind, and from your own standard authors which lie before me.

The name of the sacrament explains it; it is anointing by holy oil of a sick person when recovery is *extremely* doubtful. This, and the fact that it is supposed to be the last act of religion, give it its name.

The object of this anointing is thus explained by the doctors of Trent: "The devil is always busy in seeking to destroy the souls of men; yet it is at the hour of death that he most vehemently exerts all his power; and the object of this anointing by holy oil is to fortify the soul in the dying hour against the violent attacks of its spir-

itual enemies, and to enable it to make a holy death, and to secure a happy eternity."

The only person who can administer this sacrament is a bishop or priest. You admit a midwife, or a layman, to baptize; but a priest only can administer Extreme Unction. The reasons for this will appear in the sequel.

The oil used in this sacrament must not be common oil. That the effects intended may be produced, it must be oil of olives, "solemnly blessed by the bishop every year on Maunday-Thursday." I quote from Challoner; the sentence leaves it doubtful whether the efficacy of the bishop's blessing continues only a year, or whether the oil used must be blessed on that day. It has what is called in rhetoric, a squinting construction. As the bishop is paid for blessing it, it is probable he blesses but little at once, and that he gives it efficacy but for a limited time.

The effects and fruits of this anointing are these: it remits sins, at least such as are venial: it heals the soul of its infirmity and weakness; and helps to remove the debt of punishment due to past sins; it strengthens the soul to bear the illness of the body, and to repel its spiritual enemies; and "*if it be expedient for the good of the soul, it often restores the health of the body.*" I wish you, Sir, and my readers, to ponder the sentence in italics. Its meaning is this: if the person is restored, it is a miracle wrought by extreme unct-

tion ; if he dies, restoration would not conduce to the health of his soul !!

The manner of administering this sacrament is as follows : If the time permits, certain prescribed prayers are said—the Confiteor is repeated, and absolution is granted—then the priest, making thrice the sign of the cross, says, “ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, may all the power of the devil be extinguished in thee, by the laying on of our hands, and the invocation of the holy angels, arch-angels,” &c. Then dipping his thumb in the holy oil, he anoints the sick person in the form of a cross, upon the eyes, the ears, the nose, the mouth, the hands, and feet ; at each anointing making use of this form of prayer : “ Through this holy unction and his own most tender mercy, may the Lord pardon thee whatever sin thou hast committed by thy sight. Amen.” And the same prayer is repeated adapting the form to the several senses.

The requisite dispositions in the receiver are, faith in the sacrament—a pure desire for the health of his soul, and of his body if expedient—resignation—repentance—devotion.

In case of recovery and relapse, it may be repeated, and as often as the person relapses.

And your scriptural authority for all this you find in James v. 14, 15, which you thus translate : “ Is any sick among you ? Let him bring in the

priests of the Church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord will lift him up: and if he be in sin, his sins will be forgiven him."

Such is your Extreme Unction, as described by the Council of Trent, Challoner, and the Poor Man's Catechism. Although abridged, you, at least, will say that it is a perfectly fair abridgement. Let us now examine it in the light of Scripture and reason.

I ask you to look at your Greek Testament, and then to answer me on what authority you thus translate a portion of the 14th verse of James v.; "let him bring in the *priests* of the Church"! Ah! the priests, the priests; this sacrament is for their benefit; and by a mis-translation, the power of anointing and praying must be confined to them!

But does the text afford the shadow of a support to the sacrament? No, not even the shadow. You utterly pervert the meaning of the apostle. The anointing and prayer of James is for the life of the sick; your anointing is for their death, and is never administered whilst there is any hope of life. The anointing of James is for the cure of the body;—yours is for the cure of the soul, in reference to which the text gives no direction. The saving of the sick, and the forgiveness of sins, are in consequence of the prayer of faith. Can none but a priest offer that

prayer. The anointing of James and the prayers to be offered were to be followed with miraculous recovery; yours are to be followed with speedy death. The cures wrought by the anointing of James, were for the establishment of the claims of the Gospel;—yours, for the purpose of establishing the ghostly authority of your priesthood. That text above quoted is confessedly the only one on which you build your sacrament; and that text must be mistranslated, and utterly tortured out of its sense, and meaning, and end, even to afford a pretext to the use which you make of it. And this is but one of the many instances in which your church has changed and perverted the original meaning of the Scriptures, and forged them into chains to bind men to your system of delusion.

Having thus swept from your extreme unction, the only scriptural authority claimed for it, and hung it up as a commandment of men, I have a few questions to ask in reference to it.

Is it so that God's people need the oil of olives, blessed on Maunday-Thursday, to be placed upon their eyes, and nose, and ears, and tongue, and hands, and feet, to secure the remission of their sins; and to heal the maladies of their souls, and to enable them to repel their spiritual enemies? If this oil can do it, what need is there of the blood of Christ? If the blood of Christ, and the presence of his Spirit can do it, what is the need of this olive oil?

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But again; you require in the receiver of this sacrament, the dispositions stated above.— These are truly Christian dispositions, bating a few things in your manner of stating them. If these dispositions are possessed, will not the soul of the person be saved without your olive oil? If not possessed, will your olive oil save them?

Again; among the effects of this sacrament, as stated in the Poor Man's Catechism, p. 329, is this: "it brings him (the sick man) in safety to the port of eternal happiness." Now, Sir, does extreme unction save from purgatory? This you will not say. If not, then it only takes him to *the port* of eternal happiness. From the port he is turned into purgatory. And your priests get paid for the olive oil by which he slips safely to the port of eternal happiness—and then they get paid for the masses by which they get him out of purgatorial fires into heaven! So that extreme unction is simply a device to increase "the alms and suffrages of the faithful."

Again; what a low and sad view of the religion of God does this sacrament give to a dying man! It is administered to all that seek it on a dying bed. Let us suppose a case, which, no doubt, often occurs. There is a papist in the article of death. To this hour he has lived in sin. Feeling that death is upon him, he sends for his priest. He thinks now of nothing but confession—the eucharist, and extreme unction.

The priest appears in his robes. If the sick man is able, he confesses. If not able, the anointing commences, and proceeds in the way already stated. He is crossed and anointed on his eyes, his nose, his tongue, his ears, his hands, and feet, and the prescribed prayers are said. The man now dies in peace, feeling that his sins are remitted—that his soul is healed of its infirmities—that his spiritual enemies are all subdued, through the efficacy of olive oil, blessed on Maunday-Thursday! Not a thought of the dying man is directed to the cross of Jesus Christ, or to the efficacy of his atonement! So that extreme unction is a papal incantation, by which the priest makes a deluded people to believe that the keys of heaven and hell hang by his girdle—that by his olive oil he can procure for them all that the Bible suspends on faith in Jesus Christ! Esteem me not harsh, Rev. Sir, when I declare it as my deep conviction, that by your sacrament of extreme unction, your church is deluding and damning multitudes of souls, and from year to year. It is a wicked substitution of olive oil for the blood of Christ at the dying hour, and simply and only for the benefit of your priests.

And what a tremendous use your church has made of it. Gaining access to the dying beds of kings, princes, and barons, in past days, with your olive oil, you have extorted millions of money from those who believed in your ghostly

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power. You have thus enriched the church and impoverished the people. You have built palaces for your bishops, and reduced the people to beggary. What will a dying sinner withhold from a man who, he believes, has the power to lock him up in hell; or by a little olive oil rubbed on with his thumb, can conduct him to the port of eternal happiness?

The man yet lives who narrates the following scene, of which he was an eye and an ear witness: The chief of one of our Indian tribes, a man of great sagacity and decision, was on his dying bed. Many of his people, by a French Jesuit, were converted to the faith of your church. He knew the wiles of your missionary, and forbade him admission to his dying bed. The priest came with his olive oil, and pressed so hard for admission to him, that it was granted. "Stay," said the dying chief to the man who relates the story, "stay outside the door, and if I knock, come in." The priest entered, and the door was closed. Soon a violent knock is heard, and the man enters the room. "Take him out," said the dying chief; "take him out—land—land—give me land." The priest would put on the olive oil, but wanted first a grant of land.

Rev. Sir, your church must annul this sacrament of extreme unction, before I can return to its embrace. To my mind it is extreme nonsense. Should not incantations over dying men be left to Hottentots? I implore you to seek some other market for your olive oil, than the chambers of the dying.

With great respect, yours,

KIRWAN.

LETTER III.

PENANCE.

The pretended Sacrament described—No Scripture warrant for it—
Its absurdities—A personal inquiry.

MN DEAR SIR :—With your leave, I will proceed with my statements of the reasons which prevent my return to the embraces of your church. Permit me to ask, in the present letter, your consideration of the reason which I deduce from your sacrament of *Penance*. It presents an objection as strong as your sacrament of *Extreme Unction*, which, without meaning to be irreverent, I have already pronounced *Extreme Nonsense*.

As but few, even of your own people, understand this sacrament, I will give a brief statement of it, and from your own authors.

Penance is a sacrament by which the sins committed after baptism are forgiven. Your doctrine is, that original sin is washed away in baptism; and that penance secures the forgiveness of all sins committed after baptism! Where is this distinction taught in the Bible?

On the part of the penitent, penance consists in contrition, confession, and satisfaction. Contrition is a hearty sorrow for sin, with a resolution to sin no more; confession is a full and sincere declaration of *all* our sins to a priest; satisfaction is a faithful performance of the prayers

and good works enjoined by the confessor. So far for the penitent.

On the part of the priest, it consists in the absolution which he pronounces by the authority of Jesus Christ. The form of absolution is in these words: "I absolve thee from thy sins, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

The effects of this sacrament are thus stated in the "Poor Man's Catechism:" "It remits all the sins of the penitent without exception—restores him to the grace he had forfeited—replenishes his soul with the greatest peace, tranquillity, and spiritual delights, and reinstates him again in the friendship of God, as the prodigal son, after his return, was restored to his former honours in the house of his father." Wonderful results from such causes! May I ask here, if the parable of the prodigal son is meant to represent the way of return of a sinner to God, where did he stop to make confession and receive absolution?

None but a priest can grant absolution; and the power of the priest to absolve, you draw from John xx. 22, 23: And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained," and from Matt. xvi. 15-19.

Such, Sir, in brief, is your sacrament of penance.

Let us now look at it in the light of Scripture and reason.

And let me first ask you, how do you make a sacrament of penance? Look at Chaloner's definition of a sacrament: "It is an outward sign or ceremony of Christ's institution, by which grace is given to the soul of the worthy receiver." Now, what is the outward sign of penance? It has no outward sign, no external ceremony. It is not a sacrament according to your own rules. Your absolution is a different thing from your penance.

Again, two of the constituent elements of penance, confession and absolution, have no foundation in Scripture. Of confession I have already spoken. I have shown it to be a priestly device of the most fatal influence upon human liberty: its tendency to the corruption of morals is acknowledged. There is on my table a book called "The Garden of the Soul," bearing on its title page your own name; and such a garden! Now, conceive yourself sitting in your confessional, and whispering through the little hole in its side, in the ears of a modest or immodest young girl of eighteen, or an amiable young wife of twenty-one years, the questions on pages 212 and 214! Sir, I dare not quote them here. I strove to read them to a friend a few days since, and before I got half through he cried out, "Stop, I can hear no more." The polluting confessional is a part

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of your sacrament of penance. Of absolution I shall speak in the sequel.

Look at the texts, for a moment, which you quote as teaching your power of absolution. It seems to me that if they were capable of any other interpretation than that which you give them, you would prefer it, in order to get rid of the monstrous power with which it clothes your priests. But alas! it is for the sake of that power that you pervert them. As there were various opinions entertained as to who Christ was, we hear him, in Matt. xvi. 15, asking his disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" Peter replies, "Thou art Christ the Son of the living God," Jesus replies, "Upon this rock," that is, the confession of Peter that he was the Son of the living God, "I will build my Church." How simple and common sense!

Addressing Peter, and through him the other disciples, he says, "I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Need I tell you, Sir, that by "the kingdom of heaven," here is meant the Church of Christ. Can such a master in Israel as you are be ignorant of this? This being so, "the keys of the kingdom" simply means, the power of admitting proper persons to the Church, and excluding improper persons from it. Keys, you know, were the ancient emblem of authority. How simple and common sense is all this.

Continuing to address Peter, and through him

the other disciples, he says, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." To bind and to loose here are equivalent to bidding and forbidding, to granting and refusing, to declaring lawful or unlawful. The apostles were endued with the Holy Ghost, that they might infallibly declare the will of God to mankind, and determine what was, or was not, binding on the conscience—to show what persons ought, or ought not, to be admitted to the Church—and to decide on the characters of those whose sins were, or were not, forgiven. And whatever in these, or similar things, they bound or loosed on earth, would be bound or loosed in heaven. This is also the meaning of John xx. 22, 23, already quoted. This, Sir, I believe to be the common sense, the fair and just interpretation, of a passage on which your church has built up a priestly power, that has overshadowed the earth and enslaved nations. Where now, Sir, is your supremacy of Peter—your power of the keys—your power of absolution? Gone, like the morning cloud before the sun. Blessed be God, you have not yet turned your keys upon the common sense of the world!

Now, Sir, look for a moment at some of the absurdities connected with your interpretations of the above texts. They are sufficiently startling. Your church is built upon Peter. "Thou art

Peter; and upon this rock I build my church." So that your church is built upon the *person* of Peter; ours is built upon the truth declared by Peter. Is, Sir, your rock as our rock?

Is your church built upon Peter? Now turn from the 19th verse of the 18th of Matthew, which we have been considering, to the 22d and 23d verses of the same chapter. Peter is represented as rebuking his Lord, for the intimations he had given of his approaching death. But the Master, turning upon Peter, thus addressed him: "Get thee behind me, Satan." So that, on your principles of interpretation, your church must be built upon Satan!

What your priests, however profane or wicked, bind or loose upon earth, is bound or loosed in heaven. Now, here is a wicked man absolved by a priest; does he go to heaven? Here is a good man bound by a priest; does he go to hell? It must be so, on your principles. But you say he must be a sincere penitent, to gain any benefit from absolution. But if truly contrite, he can get to heaven without your absolution.

Take another case: the man bound by the curate may be loosed by the parish priest. I take the following illustration from a book before me: A penitent is enjoined to abstain from breakfast every morning, until his next confession. Christmas day intervenes, and he eats breakfast; not thinking that day could be in-

cluded. On confessing this at his next confession, the curate drove him from his knee, declaring that he would have no more to do with a person that so trifled with his commands. On the borders of despair, he went to the parish priest, telling him the whole story. "Do not mind it, my child," said the kind hearted father, "I will confess you." He did so, and absolved him. Here one priest binds sin on his soul, and another unbinds it. He dies in this state. What becomes of him? Does the binding of the curate send him to hell, or does the loosing of the parish priest send him so heaven? What becomes of him? Is he suspended somewhere between heaven and hell?

But let us look at the *satisfaction*, which is a part of the sacrament of penance. "It consists in a faithful performance of the penance enjoined by the priest to whom we confess, whether as to restitution, or prayers, or alms-deeds, or fasting, to make some reparation, by these eminent good works, for the injury done to God." The penance enjoined by the priest is an "exchange which God makes of eternal punishment which we have deserved by sin, into these small penitential works." I quote from Chaloner. And without satisfaction like this, the sinner cannot be saved.

Now, Sir, will you tell me where this is taught in the Scriptures Where are we told that the

blood of Christ is not sufficient to cleanse from all sin? Where is authority given to ministers or priests to exchange "eternal punishment for small penitential works?" Where does the Bible make a difference between ante-baptism and post-baptism sins?

Take another view of this thing. Penance means punishment. And "prayers, fasting, and alms," are enjoined by the priests as penance; that is, as punishment. So that your church makes prayers a punishment to atone for sins! What the Bible makes a privilege, you make a punishment! The fasting which is beneficial, is that to which we are led by a sense of our sins: you enjoin it as a punishment! And can alms-giving be a punishment, save to the worshippers of money? What are the prayers or alms worth that are offered or given as a punishment?

The penance enjoined, and the austerities voluntarily practised, are sometimes very singular, when considered in the light of making atonement for sins. Sometimes they consist in a set number of "Our Fathers" and "Hail Marys," counted on the beads or fingers, once or oftener a day, for so many days; sometimes in fasting for a given time, on given days, from meat, eggs, &c.; sometimes in a short pilgrimage to St. John's well, or St. Patrick's; sometimes, in Ireland, in going to the Seven Stations, and walking on bare knees on the ground from one station to

another. The penances enjoined by the priest are optional and multiform, and are modified according to his own prejudices and the dignity of the confessing penitent. Some of the voluntary austerities are curious enough. St. Dominick, when a child, would leave his cradle and lie upon the cold ground. I have seen many an urchin do this whose name is not yet, and is not likely to be, in the calendar. St. Francis used to call his body Brother Ass, and whip it as badly as Balaam did his. St. Francis Loyola put on iron chains and a hair shirt, and flogged himself thrice a day. He deserved it all. St. Macarius went naked six months in a desert, suffering himself to be stung with flies, to atone for the sin of having killed a flea. Now, is it not a wicked burlesque upon the religion of God, to make ignorant people believe that in these and similar ways they secure an exchange of eternal punishment? Language supplies no words in which I can express to you my deep abhorrence of your sacrament of penance.

Picture to yourself, Rev. Sir, this whole thing. There is a papist who has sinned grievously after baptism. How can he get to heaven? Through the sacrament of penance. It is not sufficient that he repent of it; no, he must confess to you; then he must perform all the austerities that you enjoin; then you absolve him; and then, taking up the key that hangs by your girdle,

you open to him the kingdom of heaven. So, then, it is in your power to say who shall and who shall not enter heaven. What blasphemous assumption, when the divine Saviour tells me, and proclaims to all men, that "he that believeth on the Son hath life." Such assumptions are only worthy of the world's scorn.

It is amazing how men, pretending to be religious, could contrive such a sacrament. It is amazing how rational men can believe it. But it is not amazing how men believing it, and in the power with which it clothes you, should fawn at your feet as spaniels. It is no wonder that they pour their treasures into your coffers as water.

I believe in repentance, and hope I am not a stranger to it. I reject penance, as a priestly device to rob the people of their money and ruin their souls. Your church must lay aside this terrible sacrament before I return to her embrace.

Before closing, let me ask you one question. Do you believe that none go to heaven from New York but those to whom you and your priests, with your keys, open its gates? It takes a hard heart and a soft head to believe this. I charge you with neither.

With great respect, yours,

KIRWAN.

LETTER IV.

Miracles—Milner's vindication—Many examples—Legends of the Saints—A miracle of my own working—Why so few miracles since the Reformation.

MY DEAR SIR :—Another reason which prevents my return to the bosom of your church, I draw from the *miraculous power* claimed for your saints and clergy. I have felt disposed to say nothing on this subject, because of the extravagance of the claim itself; and because of my reluctance to state the absurdities which crowd the legends of your saints, and which your church has palmed, and yet palms on the world as miracles. I feel afraid that some candid papist will conclude that I have at last commenced drawing on my imagination, and that the influence of my former reasoning with him will be weakened, by the utter, the intense absurdity of the miracles claimed for your saints, which I shall quote. But, pledging myself to fairness of statement, I will risk the consequences.

Milner, as you know, devotes his 23d letter to vindicate the possession of this power by your church. He says, "The Catholic Church being always the beloved spouse of Christ, and continuing at all times to bring forth children of heroic sanctity, God fails not in this, any more than in past ages, to illustrate her and them by unques-

tionable miracles; accordingly, in those processions which are constantly going on at the apostolical see, for the canonization of new saints, fresh miracles of a recent date continue to be proved, with the highest degree of evidence, as I can testify, from having perused, on the spot, the official printed account of some of them." And miraculous power is claimed by all your writers, and is put forth as an evidence of yours being the true church; and its absence from Protestant churches is considered by you a conclusive evidence against them.

Milner not only claims this power for your church, but gives the following miracles that were performed, to his own certain knowledge and belief: Twenty years before it happened, a nun predicted the fate of the king and queen of France, Louis XVI, and his consort, who were beheaded. In 1814, Joseph Lamb fell from a hay-rick and injured his spine. At Garswood, in England, is preserved the hand of one Arrow-smith, a priest, who was put to death at Lancaster, in the reign of Charles I. Lamb was signed on the back by this hand, with the sign of the cross, and was instantly healed! In 1809, Mary Wood, in striving to open a window, greatly injured her arm, so as almost to lose the use of it. She employed physicians in vain. She finally had recourse to God, through St. Winfred, by a *Novena*—that is, prayers offered for nine days.

She put a piece of moss from the Saint's well on her arm, and it was instantly restored! Miss Winfred White, for some time diseased with a curvature of the spine, was healed in an instant of time, by bathing in Holywell! Milner was not a witness of any of these miracles; but they were proved true to his satisfaction! Marvelous marvels!

Now, Sir, permit me to add to these miracles a few others from the Legends of the Saints, and no doubt equally well attested as those adduced by the learned Milner. As I have but few of these legends before me, I will quote from a recent review of the "Lives of the English Saints," now in course of publication by those marvelous men, the Oxford divines, worthy of a place in the museum as Protestant curiosities.

Somewhere near York, St Augustine restored a blind man to his sight. St. Sulpicius, when a mere child, drove away, with the sign of the cross, two black demons who strove to scare him from his devotions. St. Amatus miraculously stopped a lofty rock in the midst of its descent, with which a fiend thought to crush him in his cell. The father of St. Furceus contracted a clandestine marriage with a king's daughter. When the king found that she was likely to be a mother, he ordered her to be burned. She shed such a flood of tears as to put out the fire. Finding he could not burn, he banished her, and Furceus

was born in a foreign land. St. Mochua had to call the stags from the forest to feed the multitude of his followers. He ordered their picked bones to be placed in their skins, and by an incantation over the skins and bones the stags were brought to life, jumped up, and ran back to the woods. St. Euchadius did the same with an old favorite crow, that he had to kill to provide meat for his guests. The piety of St. Fechin was so fervent, that when he bathed himself in cold water the water became almost boiling hot. When St. Mochua wanted a fire in his cell, he called down a fire from heaven to light it. St. Goar of Treves, wanting a beam to hang up his cape, hung it on a sunbeam, where it remained until he took it down. St. Columbanus miraculously kept the grubs from his cabbage. When St. Mael was in want of fishes, he caught them on dry ground; and St. Berach, when in want of fruit, made willows to bear apples. St. Fechin, when hungry, turned acorns into pork. In travelling he was stopped by a large tree which fell across his road: he commanded it to make way, and it instantly rose to its place. He built a mill on a hill top: being asked about the water, he went to a lake, a mile distant, into which he threw his stick; the stick followed him on his return, and the water after it, and the mill worked finely. Some thievish crows carried away some of the thatch of St. Cuthbert's hut to build

their nests: at his rebuke they not only made an apology, but they brought him a piece of hog's lard to make amends for the injury. To this miracle Bede testifies. A raven plucked out the eye of an ass of St. James of Tarentaise: the saint made a hasty invocation, and the raven immediately returned and put the eye in its place, without the least injury to the ass. St. Augustine was treated with insults in a certain town in England—the fishmongers being especially active in the bad work, hanging the tails of fish upon his garments and those of his followers. For generations afterwards the children of that place were born with tails.

Your legends narrate miracles like these to any amount; and they are now reproduced from the French and English press, for the purpose of encouraging the faith of the pious. Wonderful as these are, they are by no means as wonderful as many others that the limits of a letter forbid me to quote.

And some of the saints wrought a profusion of miracles. St. Fechin was a wonderful hand at them. St. Francis far surpassed the Saviour himself. Christ was transfigured but once—St. Francis more than twenty times. St. Francis and his disciples restored more than a thousand blind to sight—and more than a thousand lame to the use of their limbs—and more than a thousand dead to life!

Now, sir, whilst these things are gravely narrated in your legends, and are read by your common people from your own books with the most pious belief in their truth, it is more than probable that this statement of them will be denounced as a bundle of Protestant lies! When a boy I read a life of St. Francis Xavier, which narrated miracles wrought by him far surpassing any here cited.

But why go to the miracles of the legends; you are daily performing miracles which come up to any of them. Your daily changing of a wafer into the real body of Christ, and then eating him, beats any thing St. Fechin ever did. Your preparing an old sinner for heaven by rubbing him with olive oil, and then opening its gates to him by the keys which are only in your possession, far surpasses Fechin's turning acorns to pork. We believe the swine themselves are constantly doing this in our western woods. And in Ireland your priests are constantly performing miraculous cures on men and cattle. Even your common people there work miracles. When a thunder storm is raging, they kindle a fire, and heat the tongs red hot. This preserves their cattle from the lightning. If they are killed notwithstanding, it is in chastisement for some sins not confessed, or some penances not rightly performed. Perhaps, Sir, it may astonish you when I tell you that I myself, whilst

yet in your faith, wrought two or three. Near my father's house was a wood in which a man was once killed. His ghost was regularly seen after dark. I never passed through that wood without crossing myself, and saying Hail Mary. And I assure you I never saw the ghost. After dusk, in the spring of the year, I was sent on an errand to a neighbour's house, which was separated from ours by two or three fields. As I ran along I saw through the mag-nifying twilight what was obviously an evil spirit. I stopped suddenly, and the sweat commenced pouring. Naturally of a resolute spirit, I thus reasoned: if I run back he can catch me; if I go forward he can but catch me. So after saying my Hail Mary, and cross-ing myself, I went forward with a trembling step. As I advanced the horns of a fiend became perfectly obvious. Almost dead with fear I rushed forward and caught hold of them. And marvellous to narrate, those fiendish horns were quickly turned into the handles of a plough! Now I submit it to you, sir, whether these miracles wrought by myself, are not as great as those wrought by St. Mochua, or St. Colum-banus. And yet I fear my chance for canonization is exceedingly small.

But considering the grave effects which have fol-lowed this claim of yours, it ought not, perhaps, to be treated lightly. And yet it is difficult to treat it otherwise.

Now, sir, will you say that the miracles adduced by Milner are worthy of a moment's consideration? Look at them again. A man hurt his back by falling from a hay-rick, and is cured by a dead man's hand! A girl in opening a window cut her arm, and felt dan-

culty in using it; she puts on a piece of moss and her arm gets well. Another girl has a diseased spine; she is cured by bathing in Holywell. Are these proofs to any mind that your church possesses miraculous power? If these are not, can the miracles selected from the legends of the middle ages be?

Can you, for a moment, place any of your miracles on an equality with those wrought by the Saviour and his apostles? Milner does it, sad I am to say, but will you, John Hughes, do it, and in the city of New York? What! place these marvels of lying legends, the productions of infamous monks of the dark ages, who made saints of necromancers, and miracles of witch stories, on the same foundation as the miracles of Christ! Will you gravely tell us, that if we deny the one we must deny the other? If I deny that the fervor of the piety of St. Fechin almost made the cold water to boil in which he bathed, must I also deny that Christ raised Lazarus from the grave? Will you, claiming to be a bishop in the church of God, say that these miracles are sustained by evidence equally conclusive as those of the Scriptures? This I will only believe when you say so.

Compare the object of scriptural and popish miracles. The one are divino attestations to the truth; the other, to yours being the true church. How different these objects! And they are no more different than the miracles. And in point of force and evidence, Milner's miracles cannot be compared to those of Irving, or of our own Mormons.

If your church possesses miraculous power, why so sparing of its use since the Reformation? If they are not all impostures, why so many in Ireland, whilst

whilst there are none in Scotland; why so many in France and Spain, and so few in New York? Come out in the open view of some intelligent Protestants, and cure a man that was born blind, or raise one from the grave that lay there until putrefaction commenced, and, then, we will ask you to excuse the utter scorn with which, until then, we must treat your impostures. My dear Sir, the world will not forget the history of Hohenlohe, the modern St. Fechin. He was forbidden to work his miracles save in the presence of some commissioners and physicians; he appealed to the Pope. The holy father enjoined him to conform. From that hour his miracles have ceased.

"Ghosts prudently withdraw at peep of day."

Miracles were vouchsafed by God divinely to attest the truth of the Gospel. This power was vouchsafed to the Apostles, and was continued in the church until the truth of the Gospel was established. Then it was withdrawn. Since the rise of popery there has been no miracles wrought. The nearest approach to one, that I now remember, for fourteen hundred years, is the fact that your church could gain such a general credence for its absurdities, and make men believe that she could work miracles.

You must give up your lying legends and your claim to miraculous power, before I can return to your fold. I feel as did our fellow-countryman with the bad asthma, who exclaimed, "If once I can get this troublesome breath out of my body, I'll take good care it shall never get in again."

With great respect, yours,

KIRWAN.

LETTER V.

Marks of the Papal being the true Church considered. Unity—
Sanctity—Catholicity—Apostolicity—Infallibility.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—In the present letter, I wish to place before you another of my reasons for not returning to the church of my fathers, drawn from *the exclusive claims of your church*—claims which, if well-founded, consign to eternal damnation all who refuse to believe its doctrines, or to submit to its authority. That these claims are put forth, you will not deny. You glory in them. Milner and Butler assert them, and seek to sustain them by Scripture and reason. “The Poor Man’s Catechism,” from which I like to quote, because it is the channel through which you seek to impress the common mind, says, “those who submit not to the doctrine and authority of the Holy Catholic Church, are all out of her communion; as pagans, infidels, Turks, Jews, heretics and schismatics.” And by the Holy Catholic Church is meant, that church whose head is the pope. This is sufficiently explicit. So that in your estimation, and in that of your church, the Protestant churches around you are no better than Jewish synagogues, or pagan temples; the people that worship in them, are no better than Turks or pagans; and such men as the late excellent Milnor, as Spring, Knox,

Bangs, Williams, Wainright, Skinner, your co-temporaries, and equals, and fellow citizens, are no better than Hume, Voltaire, Gibbon; or at least than Jewish Rabbies, Turkish Musties, or Hindoo Priests, who mingle their blood with their sacrifices. That such is your belief is apparent in your conduct. You and your priests so treat them. The belief of your people is, that all beyond the pale of your church are devoted to destruction. I remember the day when I had no more doubt of it than of my own existence. If there are papists who believe otherwise, and who exercise a charitable hope as to the salvation of Protestants, as I believe there are many, so far forth they are not papists.

The process by which you reach this terrible dogma is a very short one. There is no salvation out of the true church. The Roman Catholic is the true Church—therefore, there is no salvation out of the Roman Catholic Church. Here is your logical and theological guillotine, by which you sever the hopes which bind millions of your race to God and heaven; who serve the one, and deserve the other, at least, as well as you do. And, then, the marks of yours being the true church, you parade before us with as much confidence as if they were true; and with as much assurance as if they were never, instead of being a thousand times, refuted. Permit me, in the briefest manner, to consider each of these marks. They are Unity, Sanctity, Catholicity, Apostolicity, and Infallibility.

Your first mark is *Unity*. Has your church this mark? In what one thing are you united? Not in the head of the church. You have a pope;—some say, others deny, that he is the head. One goes for the pope,—another for a general council,—a third for both united. Is this unity? But if we admit your unity, what follows? Does the agreement of numbers in maintaining error and superstition, prove that in which they are united true? Then Paganism, and Mahometanism, and Budhism, may be proved divine. These systems have more followers than you can boast.

You are not agreed as to the authoritative councils of your church. You are yet agitated by controversies on the subject. Nor are you agreed in the doctrines of the Bible. Never were Arminians and Calvinists more widely separated on these matters than you are. Look at the fierce contentions of your Jansenists and Jesuits, unsettled to the present hour. If united, what meant the fierce controversies of your Scotists and Thomists—of your Canonists and Schoolmen—of your Nominalists and Realists. But I cannot weary you or my readers on this matter. You talk about the differences among Protestants—they are not to be compared to those among papists. You put into my hand Bossuet's "Variations of Protestants;" I put into yours, "Edgar's Variations of Popery." Where Protec-

tants differ in one point, papists differ in five,—when they differ in minor matters, you differ in the veriest essentials. Protestants agree as to the head of the church, Christ;—and as to the rule of the church, the Bible. You differ as to both.

True, you have an apparent external unity. But how have you gotten it? What is it worth? You set up monstrous claims, and all who do not admit them you cast off. Milner's "Apostolical Tree," shows how the work of lopping off has progressed. You have laid the axe upon every green and fruitful branch; and the old stump and withered branches remain, a unity! And what is your unity worth? If I return to your church, "I must believe whatever the Holy Catholic Church believes and teaches." This I must do without knowing, and without ever being able to know, *all* that she believes and teaches. I must put myself into your hands, and give you power to think for me, and to believe for me; and then I must believe, and swear to, what you thus think and believe for me, at the peril of being cut off and cast into the fire. Sir, this is horrible slavery. Do you think men will long submit to it?

Your boasted unity is a fable—your apparent unity, is slavery. You present a united front in your opposition to Protestants; but never were the bowels of the victim of the Asiatic cholera

more terribly convulsed, than is the bosom of your church by distracting controversies. Your priests and bishops and people may fight as they may, but they are a unity as long as they remain within the same organization. If one of them secedes, if you cannot kill him, you damn him, for the sake of unity.

Your next mark is *Sanctity*. I admit that sanctity, or holiness, is a mark of a true disciple, and of a true church. The people and church of Christ should be holy in all manner of conversation. Sanctity you claim for your church as one of its distinguishing marks. But in what is it manifested? You reply, first, in her doctrines. But what doctrine of the Bible has not your church corrupted? What institution has it not perverted? And so conscious is your church of this that it withholds the unadulterated word from the people. You reply, again, *in the means of holiness*. By these you mean *the sacraments*. But you have grievously perverted the only two sacraments instituted by Christ; and you have added to them five which have no divine authority, and whose only object is to give you power, and to obtain for you "the alms and the suffrages of the faithful." You reply again, *in her fruits of holiness*. By these you mean the virtues practised by papists. I could not, for a moment, deny the true piety of many papists, the exalted piety of some; but will you, Sir, as-

sert that the piety and virtues of your people are so much more resplendent than those of any, or all other people, as to mark yours as the true church? If so, it seems to me that you would assert that Jupiter surpasses the moon, and the moon the sun, in brightness. The evidences to the contrary are no more apparent in the one case than in the other. Look at the mass of your clergy in the sunniest days of your church, and what were their fruits of holiness? Your own historians being witnesses, what were the fruits of your nunneries, your monasteries, your monks, and your other orders, when there were no Protestants to unveil their enormities? What are now the fruits of your religion in the states of South America? Have you seen the testimony of Mr. Thompson, our late minister to Mexico, as to the papal clergy of that country? As to the fruits of holiness, compare Spain, Italy, with Scotland or New England.

But I will not proceed with the comparison farther than to ask you to compare the Protestant ministry of New York with the papal—the congregation of St. Patrick's with any large and weakly Protestant congregation in the city, as to the fruits of holiness, and you yourself will be astonished at the difference. The general rule is, that purely papal countries are the most debased and immoral, and purely Protestant countries are the most enlightened, and most abound-

ing in every good work. The tenth century, the noonday of popery, was the midnight of our race. Nor does the history of the world present such evidences of unbridled, overgrown depravity, as does the history of your church.

Your next mark is *Catholicity*. You claim this title for your church as to time, persons, and places. As to time, your church rose upon the ruins of that founded by Christ and his apostles, and centuries after their death. The peculiar doctrines and ceremonies of popery are derived from the heathen, and were engrafted on Christianity. Instead of your church, as you claim, being identical with that of Christ and his apostles, there is not an essential particular, in which it is not in opposition to it. I admit, as to persons, that yours is a very numerous church; but it never formed a third part of Christendom. Is the standard of truth the numbers that profess it? Then Christianity was a lie whilst in the minority;—and so it is a lie yet, because, taking our whole race together, vastly in the minority. So I admit, as to places, that popery is very widely diffused. But is not Protestantism also? Where has a papist gained foothold where there is not a Protestant? So that your claim to this mark is as absurd as it is groundless. Your catholicity is a vain and empty boast. There is a Catholic Church, but it is not yours.

Your next mark is *Apostolicity*—that is, a re-

gular succession from the Apostles in the chair of St. Peter. Now, Sir, this claim is put forth by other churches as strongly as yours, and on foundations even stronger than yours. I now refer to the Armenian, Nestorian, and Syrian churches, which were founded before the Gospel was preached at Rome. It is beyond the power of man to establish this claim. If established, must we receive as a true minister every man coming to us in the regular line, whatever be his doctrines or morals? What is the test of apostolicity? Is it succession, or doctrines? Most obviously doctrines. "If there come any unto you, and bring not *this doctrine*, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." Standing upon this one text, I would turn you away from my door, even had I seen the hands of all the apostles upon your head, unless you preached their doctrines. Why, the strong language of Paul would even warrant me to curse you, coming to me with your claim of succession, without apostolical doctrine. Read it:—"But though *we*, or an *angel from heaven*, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that we have preached, let him be accursed." Sir, if I try your succession by your doctrine, the true test of succession, I could soon place you among those who said they were apostles and were not.—From what Apostle, save Judas, many are descended, who are crying out, Apostolical succes-

tion, Apostolical succession! I cannot conceive.

Your next mark is *Infallibility*. Under all the circumstances of the case, this claim is truly ludicrous. Where is the seat of infallibility?—Some say it resides in the pope. But how is he made infallible? The pope dies; an election for a new one is ordered. He is to be elected from the cardinals—all fallible men, if no worse. After endless intrigue, and boundless corruption, and numerous ballotings, the lot falls upon a fallible cardinal. Will you tell me how such an election makes him infallible? But others say, that the pope is not infallible, and that he may be deposed for heresy. So that here you are divided.

Some say the seat of infallibility is a general council. But how is this? Here are three hundred fallible men assembled in general council; how do they become infallible? Will you tell me the process? How do finites make an infinite? Heap them up as you may, are they not a heap of finites? And crowd together as many fallible men as you may, are they any thing else than a crowd of fallibles? But by what chemical or alchemical process can you deduce the infallible from the fallible?

Nor is this the worst. We find one general council denouncing another—the church of one age contradicting the church of another. The seat of infallibility is thus undetermined by you; whilst the proofs of your church's fallibility fill

the world. It is infallibly certain that your church is fallible.

Thus is your church, utterly destitute of every mark of being the true church, which you claim for it. Its unity is discord, or slavery—its sanctity is corruption—its catholicity is assumption—its apostolicity and infallibility each a lie. Could I speak of your church in the masculine and feminine gender, as do some of your writers, instead of admitting her to be the one, holy, catholic, apostolical, and infallible church, I would call her the mother of harlots, and the father of lies; the man of sin fully revealed, with “powers, and signs, and lying wonders.”

And yet, whilst common sense rejects your claims, and common reason disproves them, and the Bible denies them, unless in the case of invincible ignorance, you cut off all beyond your pale from all communion with God—from all hope of heaven! I regard this as simply wicked. To gain your point, you rob the Father of us all of his goodness; man you drive to despair, and you convert God into a tyrant. If a boat were as rotten as I believe your church to be, I would not trust it to carry me across the North river. And yet it claims the entire monopoly of carrying to heaven all the souls that ever enter it, and for no reason, human or divine, that I can see, unless it be for the freight.

My Bible tells me, Sir, that whosoever believ-

eth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved.—
The sincere believers in the Lord Jesus Christ,
whether in your church or other churches, or in
no church, form a part of that church which Christ
will present to the Father, without spot or wrin-
kle or any such thing. By setting up its claim
to be the only true church—by denying salvation
to all but your own members, with the exception
of the invincibly ignorant, you deny the doctrine
of the Bible and of my faith—you lay down a
principle, unsustained by sense or Scripture,
from which the mind of the world revolts, and
from which my soul turns away, as from a thing
the most offensive. Your exclusive claims must
be proved, or abandoned, from their Alpha to
their Omega, before I can return to your church.

With great respect, yours,

KIRWAN.

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LETTER VI.

Relics—Relics the parent of miracles—The importance of relics—
Specimens of relics—The abuses of relics—Indulgence—To whom
and by whom granted—Their fearful effects.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—Permit me to ask your kind attention, in the present letter, to two more objections which prevent my return to your church, drawn from *your use of relics and indulgences*. The importance which you attach to these things, and the evils which flow from them, demand a letter for the due consideration of each; but I will consider them both in one, and, as I trust, without weakening the force of my objections.

“Relics are the dead bodies or bones of saints, and *whatever belonged to them in their mortal life.*” The clause I place in italics enables you to multiply them indefinitely. These relics are honored with an inferior and relative, but not with divine honor. And they are honored, 1st, because they were the temples of God; 2dly, because they are to be raised from the dead; 3dly, because of their miraculous power; 4thly, because they encourage the faithful to imitate their virtues. This is Challouer’s account of them, with which that of Milner agrees.

This doctrine of relics is intimately connected with that of miracles—it flows from it. The man

who performed miracles, when living, should be, after death, highly honored; his bones may perform them after death; and, as in many cases they do perform them, their relics should be honored with an inferior and relative, but not with a divine honor. Here is the link which connects your doctrine of relics with your miracles.

Relics are matters of immense importance to Rome. They are to your churches what the ark of the covenant, and the pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, were to the Jewish temple. Hence the prodigious efforts of past ages to obtain relics, and the enormous prices paid for them, in order to place them in churches, and the sleepless vigilance with which they have been guarded, lest they should be stolen for the adorning of new churches by their virtues. They have been more than mines of wealth to Holy Mother, as they have brought her the gold and the silver, without the trouble of mining, smelting, or coining it.

If a bone or a relic of a saint could be secured for a new church, the church was called by his name, and placed under his guardianship. This is the origin of calling churches after the names of saints. And thus nations were placed under the guardianship of saints--as Ireland under that of St. Patrick--Scotland under that of St. Andrew--England under that of St. George. So

also cities were placed under the care of saints, and their relics were esteemed as imparting far greater security against assault than cannon, walls, or bulwarks. Constantine, you know, defended the town of Nisibis with the dead body of St. James; and when the Emperor Leo desired to secure the relics of Simon the Stylite from Antioch, for the purpose of defence, the prudent citizens replied, "Our city has no walls, and we have brought here the holy body of Simon, that it might serve us in the stead of walls and bulwarks." And so individuals are placed under a guardian saint, or they select one for themselves. I remember, when a boy, I had one myself; but his name I am utterly unable to recall. I have no doubt but that you will say he look bad care of me.

There is, I learn, an authentic list of the relics, deemed true, possessed and published by your church. I have never seen it. It must be a very curious book. In the absence of your catalogue, I select a few of the relics greatly venerated by papists, from books of authority that lie before me. They are almost as amusing as your miracles. I will omit those too offensive to be named, out of respect for you, my readers, and myself. The arms, legs, fingers, toes of the saints are greatly multiplied. There are eight arms of St. Matthew, three of St. John, and almost any number of St. Thomas a-Becket. There are in the

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Church of Lateran, the ark made by Moses in the wilderness, the rod of Moses, and the table on which the last supper was instituted by the Saviour. The table is entirely at Rome; but there are many pieces of it in other places. On the altar of the Lateran are the heads of Peter and Paul entire; but there are pieces of them in Bilboa, greatly honored by the monks. St. Peter's Church is blessed with the cross of the penitent thief; with the lantern of Judas; with the dice used by the soldiers in casting lots for the Saviour's garments; with the tail of Balaam's ass; and with the axe, saw, and hammer of St. Joseph. Different churches are enriched with pieces of the wood of the cross; and were the pieces all brought together, they would make a hundred crosses. In one church is some of the manna in the wilderness; in another some blossoms from Aaron's rod; in another an arm of St. Simon; in another the picture of the Virgin, painted by Luke—in another one of her combs; in another the combs of the apostles, but little used; in another a part of the body of St. Lazarus, that smells; in another a part of the Gospel of Mark, in his own handwriting; in another a finger of St. Ann, the Virgin's sister; in another St. Patrick's stick, with which he drove venomous reptiles from Ireland; in another some of St. Joseph's breath, caught by an angel in a vial; in another a piece of the rope with which Judas hung him-

self; in another some of the Virgin's hair—in another some of her milk. And the monks once showed among their relics the spear and shield with which Michael encountered the dragon of Revelation; and some relic-monger had a feather from the wing of the Holy Spirit, when taking the form of a dove he abode upon Christ at his baptism! On the miracles wrought by the relics of the saints I have already sufficiently dwelt.— They are various, and very numerous.

I will not, I cannot, here dwell upon the awful abuses of your doctrine of relics; on the robbery of all kinds of graves in Palestine, and the hawking of pilfered bones all over Europe; on the selling of old wood, sufficient to warm a small town through the winter, as pieces of the cross; on the selling of hands and feet of particular saints, until the proof is positive that some of the favored ones had as many hands as Briareus, and as many feet as the crawling worm we call the centipede. I turn from the abuse to the doctrine.

Now, Sir, where is the origin of your doctrine of relics? Can you find a trace of it in the New Testament? Will you, for a moment, compare the sham miracles wrought at the tombs of some of your saints with that wrought by the bones of a prophet of Israel? Will you dare to say that the curing of a sore throat, by a dead man's hand, is to be placed on the same ground with the miraculous cures of the apostles? I venerate the

names, I would even decorate the tombs of the good; but what virtue is there in a bone from the body of Paul or Peter? or in a slip of wood from the cross? or in a strand from the rope with which Judas hung himself? or in some hairs from the tail of the beast which Balaam whipped.

If relics ever performed miracles, why do they not perform some now? Is the virtue of all your old bones exhausted? Where is the holy coat of Treves? Where now are the pilgrims to the bones of Becket? Where is your shop in New York for the sale of holy teeth, and holy fingers, and holy bones, taken from the graves of the saints? Sir, the whole matter is one of the vilest impositions ever practiced upon the credulity of man. I do not charge you with believing a word of it. I could almost as soon believe in the virtue of the paring of the toe-nails of some of your saints, as admit that a man of your high sense can believe in these things.

But I must hasten to a brief consideration of your doctrine of *indulgence*. And how shall I characterize it?

Your church teaches that sins of a certain character deserve temporal and eternal punishment. Penance secures the remission of the latter; indulgence releases from the former. So that indulgences secure a release from the debt of temporal punishment.

No person but a lineal descendant of St. Peter

can grant an indulgence. And that all such have the power of granting them, is clearly proved, by the fact that the Saviour gave the keys to Peter, and told him that whatsoever he bound or loosed on earth should be bound or loosed in heaven.

Indulgences can be only granted to those who have, by penance, secured the remission of eternal punishment; and they can be granted even to such only for a good cause or motive. Unless the cause or motive is a *good one*, heaven does not loose what the bishop looses. The causes or motives deemed good are, "the doing of great works for the glory of God and the public benefit of the church, such as the propagation of the catholic faith, building churches, alms, &c."— And the way in which the bishop secures the remission of the temporal punishment of the indulged one,—he draws upon the satisfaction of Christ and his saints, called "the treasure of the church," and offers the draft to God, as an equivalent for the punishment due to the individual! I do think that some heated controversialist have distorted this doctrine of your church; but you will not say that this is a distortion of it. It is taken, almost literally, from Challoner and Milner.

The illustration of Milner, of the working of the thing, is a curiosity in its way. It is drawn from 2 Sam., 12th chapter. David, by the murder of Uriah, and by adultery with his wife, incurred both eternal and temporal punishment.

He confessed to Nathan and did penance, and eternal punishment was remitted. The temporal yet remained, and he suffered it all. And why? There was no priest or bishop to grant him indulgence!

Such, Sir, is your doctrine of indulgence. Permit me to give you my thoughts in reference to it.

There is not a shadow of authority for it in the Scriptures. The church has authority to receive those she deem worthy of membership, and to cast out offenders. And when offenders, cast out from her bosom, have given due evidence of repentance, she has the power of again receiving them; she is bound to do so. Upon this simple scriptural position your church has erected the sacrament of penance, and the doctrine of indulgence!

Nor have you a shadow of authority for prescribing a meritorious satisfaction to God, in lieu of the penalty annexed to his law, and pronounced against sin. I have already examined and exploded your claims as to the power of the keys, and as to binding and loosing. So unreasonable, I may say, so foolish are they, that their assertion only exposes you to ridicule. Let us suppose that David were now king of the State of New-York, with the sins of the matter of Uriah fresh upon him: could you go to him and say, "May it please your majesty, I John Hughes, by the power of binding and loosing transferred to me by Peter, will grant you indulgence from the temporal punishment due to your sins; and that child born to you by the wife of Uriah shall live, by virtue of my indulgence, if you only build for me a splendid cruciform church, and endow it with regal magnificence?" Should you do this, would not your conduct be branded, not only

as revoltingly arrogant, but as blasphemous? And is not this the way that many of your churches were built and endowed?

But you now lower your tone, and say, that indulgences only remit the temporal punishment inflicted by the church. But how does this mend the matter? By your power of binding or loosing, you can send a man to hell or to heaven; you can inflict any punishment you see fit; and you can demand of the penitent, for indulgence, any "good works" you see fit. Here, Sir, is the key which unlocks a chamber in your church filled with rottenness and putrefaction, more foul and filthy than the world has ever seen. Need I revert to the traffic in indulgences so zealously promoted by your popes in past days? Need I point you to their wholesale manufacture by your popes—to their selling them by wholesale to tribes of vagabond monks, who hawked them all over Europe at prices to suit purchasers? The pope drove as good a bargain as he could with the monks, and the monks with the people. For the indulgence which a poor peasant could purchase for a few pennies, a prince must pay pounds. The common sense of the world was insulted; the yoke of Rome became too heavy for the nations longer to bear; a poor monk discovered a copy of the Bible, and its truths filled his mind and his soul; strong in the Lord, he went out from his dark cell with the lamp of life in his hand; the Reformation follows. And for the exposure of her frauds and wickedness, your church has sent that poor monk to a place where the efficacy of seven sacraments—of all masses—of all indulgences—can never reach him.

But you will say all this was the abuse of the thing. My dear Sir, your doctrines of relics and indulgences have no use—they are all abuse. Guard them as you may in your Catechisms and books, practically they are all abuse. Millions have prayed at the tombs of your saints, who never offered an intelligent prayer to God through his Son. Millions have worshipped your relics, who never worshipped God in spirit and in truth. And millions have sought deliverance from sin by your penances, and extreme unctions, and indulgences, who never sought it through the blood of Jesus Christ. And at this hour many of your churches in Rome are nothing but spiritual shops for the sale of indulgences.

The frauds which your church has practised on the world, by her relics and indulgences are enormous. If practised by the merchants of New-York, in their commercial transactions, they would send every man of them to State Prison.

By your doctrine of relics you lead the people into idolatry on the one hand—by your doctrine of indulgence you give them a license to commit sin on the other. At least this is their practical effect. It is said of the holy Sturme, the disciple of St. Winifrid, that in passing a horde of unconverted Germans, as they were bathing in a stream, he was so overpowered by the intolerable stench of sin that arose from them, he nearly fainted away. Similar is the effect of the odor of your relics and indulgences upon me. Your church must abandon them utterly before I can return to her communion.

With great respect, yours,

KIRWAN.

LETTER VII.

Unmeaningness of Romish Doctrines and Ceremonies.—Baptism—
The Mass—Penance—Extreme Unction—Holy Water—Prayers to
the Saints—Withholding the Scriptures.

REV. AND DEAR SIR :—I ask your attention in the present letter, to the consideration of another objection, which, mountain-like, opposes my return to your church, drawn from *the utter unmeaningness of your peculiar doctrines and ceremonies*. If I coin a new word to express my meaning, surely you will forgive me, a bishop in a church which has coined doctrines, and sacraments, and ceremonies, without meaning, and without end.

When I look into the New Testament, every thing there is plain and simple. True, there are some doctrines there taught, which are above my entire comprehension; but yet they are *plainly* taught. Having settled the divine authority of the Scriptures, I never question what they plainly teach. Its most mysterious truths are not opposed to my reason; they are only above it.—When I look at the worship, and ceremonies there enjoined, they all seem to me perfectly simple and expressive. And so are the worship and ceremonies of almost all the Protestant churches with which I am acquainted. So far as they deviate from simplicity and expressive-

ness, do they deviate from the apostolical model. But when I turn to your church—the church of my fathers—every thing peculiar to it wears a contrary aspect, and to my mind seems utterly unmeaning, and frequently absurd. Permit me to illustrate what I mean. And even should I occupy this letter with my illustrations, my only excuse to you and my readers is, the importance of the subject.

I begin with your sacrament of Baptism. This we all admit to be a sacrament; but I have now to do with the power and significance which you give it, and the ceremonies you connect with it.

The effects of baptism when duly administered, as stated by Challoner, are these:—It washes away original sin—it remits all actual sin—it infuses the habit of divine grace into the soul—it gives a right and title to heaven—it makes us children and members of the church. Now, Sir, I have no sense by which I can perceive how the application of water by a priest, or a minister, or a laic, or a midwife, can accomplish all this, whilst testimony to the contrary addresses itself to all my senses. Christ died for the sins of all that believe in him—it is faith in Christ that secures the washing away of original and actual sin—and faith is the exercise of a heart renewed by the Holy Ghost. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God and a title to heaven. All

this I can understand; but how your dipping three times in water can do all this, I see not. What the Bible attributes to the Holy Spirit, and to the exercise of true faith, you claim for the sacrament of baptism!

If your doctrine of baptismal regeneration is true, what a singular commentary we have of it in the lives of your people! What singular manifestations of the habits of divine grace which your baptism infuses into the soul, you see daily among your people! I only wonder that the facts in the case have not long since exploded your doctrine, and led you back to the simplicity of the sacrament as taught in the Bible! The apostles administered baptism to those who confessed faith in Jesus Christ; and through this sacrament we obtain a place and a name in the visible church. This all men can understand; but how you, or any mortal man, by the application of water in any or all ways, can wash away the original and actual sins of the sinner,—infuse into his soul the habits of grace, and give him a title to heaven, I cannot comprehend. If your baptism could only do this, it would wonderfully mend the habits of many of your people, and save some of the criminal courts of New-York a world of trouble!

And the power you claim for it is no more unmeaning than the ceremonies you connect with it. This sacrament, ordinarily, must be administered

in churches with founts, whose water must be blessed "on the vigils of Easter and Whitsunday." There must be godfathers and godmothers. The priest blows in the face of the subject of baptism thrice, to drive Satan out of him! Then blessed salt is put in his mouth! Then exorcism is performed to drive the devil out of him! This is all done in the porch of the church. Then he is introduced into the church, where prayers are said. Then the priest puts his spittle on his ears and nose. Then he is anointed with holy oil, "blessed on Maunday-Thursday."—And then he is baptized. Then he is anointed on the top of the head with holy chrism. Then a white linen cloth is placed on his head. Then a lighted candle is put in his hand! Then the ceremony is ended, and the person is dismissed, his sins all washed away—the habits of grace infused into his soul, and his title to heaven in his pocket!

Now, Sir, excite my wits as I may, I cannot understand all this. It is addressed to my ignorance.

The whole ceremony of your *Mass* is yet more unmeaning to me. Often as I have witnessed it, I never gleaned one intelligent idea from it—nor does one out of one million of your people. I have just read through the laboured explanation of it by Bishop England; and it is truly painful to see no noble a mind expending its powers in

the vain attempt to give meaning to every thread of such a-gossamer web;—to give sense and significance to what is so utterly nonsensical.

“In the Mass,” says Dr. England, “Christ is the victim; he is produced by the consecration, which, by the power of God, and the institution of the Redeemer, and the act of the priest, place the body and blood of Christ, under the appearance of bread and wine, upon the altar; then the priest makes an oblation of this Victim to the Eternal Father on behalf of the people, and the victim undergoes a destructive change, showing forth the death of the Redeemer, and making commemoration thereof, by the exhibition of the apparent separation of the body from the blood; the former being under the appearance of bread, and the latter under the appearance of wine, and by the consumption of both by the priest.” This is, on the whole, the clearest account of the mass that I have ever seen from the pen of a priest; and yet what mind can understand it? Sir, do you understand it? Christ produced from some bread and wine by a priest—this produced Christ is laid upon the altar by the priest—an oblation of this produced Christ is made to the Eternal Father by the priest—the produced Christ undergoes a destructive change in the act of oblation—this oblation of the produced Christ is offered for the people—and then this produced, offered Christ, and after he has undergone a

destructive change, is eaten by the priest! Sir, all this is as unmeaning to me as the leaves which the fabled sybil scattered on the winds. And this unmeaning Mass, a greater mass of absurdity than ever heathen ingenuity or depravity invented, is the chief source of edification to the nine-tenths of the papal world! If it were merely unmeaning, without being blasphemous and wicked, I could extend to it some toleration.

And the absurdity of the whole thing is increased to intensity by the fact that the pantomime is performed in Latin! Pray, Sir, how many of your worshippers at St. Patrick's understand English, not to say Latin? Why use a language, now no longer spoken by any nation or people, which is now simply a medium of intercourse among scholars? The answer given to this question by Challoner, is one of the most cool insults that I have ever known offered to the common sense of the world. Here it is:—

1. Because it is her ancient language . . . and the church, which hates novelty, desires to celebrate her liturgy in the same language;—
2. For a greater uniformity in public worship; that a papist, wherever he wanders, may witness the ceremonies of the mass in the same language;—
3. To avoid the changes to which all vulgar languages are exposed. He also tells us that it is unnecessary to understand what we are saying, if our hearts are only sincere! Sir, I see not

how men who offer, or receive such statements as reasons, can have the faculty of understanding a reason. Because the ritual of the Mass was first formed in Latin; because Mass was first said in Latin at Rome, the hatred of your church to novelty forbids her to change the language of her ritual, when there is not a congregation on earth that can understand it! And it is not necessary to understand the language in which we address ourselves to God, if we only intend to worship him! And such is the excuse you make for the man who may be worshipping a false relic for a true one. If he only means to honour the true relic, it makes no difference! If he mistakes the thigh of Barabbas for that of Barnabas; or the finger of Pilate for that of Peter; or the hair of Jezebel for that of Mary; or the head of Balaam's ass for that of Paul, it is all the same, if he only means to worship the true relic! And I suppose the difference, Sir, is very little.

These things may be very clear to you and to your priests, and people; but to me they are utterly without meaning, save a meaning that insults my common sense.

And such is the fact as to your doctrine of Penance, and Extreme Unction, which I have already examined. I am a sinner. To obtain forgiveness, you tell me that I must confess to you—that I must perform the penance you enjoin—that I must receive absolution from you—and

that not until this is done. I cannot procure forgiveness. Now I cannot understand how this process secures for me what I desire. I readily understand how, if I confess my sins to God, and forsake them, and rest with true faith on his Son, I can obtain forgiveness. But your doctrines of penance, and its reputed efficacy, are as difficult for me to understand as they are contrary to the Bible.

And so as to your Extreme Unction. I am in a dying state. The sands in my glass are almost run. You come to my dying bed with your little cup of olive oil, blessed on Maunday-Thursday. Dipping your thumb in the box, you cross and anoint my eyes, my nose, my tongue, my ears, my hands, my feet, and when the crossing and anointing is over, I am prepared for "the port of eternal happiness." Now, Sir, after every effort, I cannot understand how olive oil produces those effects, if rubbed on with both your thumbs, and with all your fingers. I can readily see how the blood of Christ applied to my soul in the dying hour by the Holy Spirit, fits it for its departure; but how olive oil, or any other oil, rubbed on by your thumb, or poured upon me in a deluge, can effect this, is a mystery utterly beyond my power of solving.

And to whichever of your peculiar doctrines or ceremonies I turn, I find the same unmeaningness in them all.

I go into your church, St. Patrick's. I go with the multitude to the stone basin containing the holy water, and dipping my fingers into it, I cross myself with the water. This water is made holy by being exorcised by the priest, mixed with salt, and then prayed over. And I cross myself with it that it may defend me

from the power of the devil! Now, Sir, all this I cannot understand. The devil is cast out of the water—then the water is salted—then it is consecrated—and then I am required to sprinkle myself with it in order to keep off the devil. I can readily see how salt will keep the water from becoming putrid, but how you get Satan out of the water, and how the water can keep Satan away from me, is beyond my comprehension. And where do you get this rite of holy water? I remember, when a boy, seeing the priest on Sunday passing through a densely crowded chapel, with two boys carrying a tub of holy water before him, and he sprinkling it upon the people with something which I then thought was a cow's tail. And if that water drove the devil out of some of them that I well remember, I would like to know how they acted when he was in them. If holy water would only produce the effects which you attribute to it, I would wish you to give many of our countrymen a pretty thorough sprinkling.

I find the same difficulty in your doctrine which teaches me to pray to the Saints. How Paul or Peter can hear me in New-York, and another in Cork, praying to them at the same time, passes my comprehension. I am sure poor Mary must have her hands full if she attends to all who supplicate her favour. I have no doubt that, in the papal world, ten pray to her, where one prays to God.

Nor can I comprehend why, or for what purpose, you withhold from me the free use of the Scriptures. They are a revelation from God to man—not to priests only, but to the race. They are the chart of the way to life, and all men are commanded to search

To Bishop Hughes.

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them. Why not permit, command all men to search them? The shipping merchant furnishes his captains with charts of all the seas over which they are to sail, and enjoins a constant use of them; and you take from me the chart which God has given me to direct me across the ocean of life, and to a safe anchorage beneath the shelter of the Rock of Ages.— Why is this?

My dear Sir, God has given me a mind to understand his will, and in revealing his will to me he has consulted the intelligence with which he has endowed me. He asks of me an intelligent service and worship. He requires all men to worship him in spirit and in truth. Your church requires me to deny the testimony of my senses—to go contrary to the decisions of my reason—to believe, not only without, but against, evidence,—to believe in doctrines as true, which common reason pronounces absurd, and to submit to ceremonies which would seem solemn were they not so ludicrous and farcical. I believe it is Thomas Aquinas, who proves the duty of inferiors to submit to superiors in the church, from the very pertinent passage in Job, “the oxen were ploughing and the asses feeding beside them.” And whilst I have no objection to your bishops and priests considering themselves oxen, I prefer, on the whole, a religion, to believe and practice which, does not require me to be turned into a donkey.

With great respect, yours,

KIRWAN.

LETTER VIII.

The destiny of the Papacy—Its growth—Its history not yet written—The Reformation—Reasons for the extinction of popery—1. Incapable of reformation—2. Its reformation impossible—3. Opposed by the intelligence of the world—4. By its piety—5. The causes which gave it origin passing away—6. Its extinction ordained—How it is to be done.

MY DEAR SIR :—In my last letter I brought to a close the chief objections which prevent my return to your church. As they bear, at least, upon my own mind, you and all men will say that they are insurmountable. If I have misstated any of your doctrines—if I have magnified any of their absurdities—I have done it ignorantly. And if I have uttered a sentence that could have been avoided in the discussion, and that can be interpreted as personally offensive or disrespectful to yourself, I regret it. I feel proud of you as a countryman ; I sincerely respect your character ; and the only feeling in my soul in reference to you is, one of deep, I might almost say, agonizing regret, that you should lend your talents, character, and influence to the sustaining of such a system of delusion as is popery, which I deem equally at war with the Bible and with the common sense and best interests of men.—However much or little value you place on this avowal, it is made in sincerity. In the present letter, which will close those addressed to you

personally, I will ask your attention to some considerations bearing on the ultimate destiny of your church.

The growth of your church has been like that of the mustard seed—small in its beginning, but gradually unfolding, until its branches overshadowed the world. It took centuries, and generations of men endowed with all the deceiveableness of an unrighteous policy, to perfect its despotic unity. Corruption was introduced so gradually as to create no general alarm. And the truth of God was so mixed up with the traditions of men, as to take away the power of the truth, and as to rivet upon the world the traditions of men as the commandments of God; and the whole system was so adapted to the tendencies of our fallen nature, as to gain easy access for it into barbarous and semi-civilized states. From being an ally of the state, it rose to the government of the state. It put out, first, the lights of civil, and then of religious liberty. By it kings reigned, and princes decreed judgment. And by the silent and gradual deposit of corruption and power, your church rose, a vast form and complicated, of superstition, error, and tyranny, shutting out the light of heaven from the mind, and the hope of heaven from the soul, and filling the world with the gloom and terror of its despotism. O, Sir, the history of your church, from the seventh to the seventeenth century, is yet

unwritten. Much has been revealed, but the one-half has not been told us. Nor will man ever know, until the day of final revealing, a tithe of the miseries and woes which it has inflicted on our race. When the pall of darkness which now conceals them will be drawn aside, and when in all their crimson hues they will be exposed to the gaze of a collected universe—when the martyrs from the “Alpine Mountains cold”—and from the vales of Piemont—and from the dungeons of the Inquisitions—when the Huguenots of France, and slaughtered Protestants of the isles and the continents shall all rise up and testify against her, where can popes, prelates, and priests then find a hiding place? The rocks and mountains, disregarding their cries, will not fall upon them, nor hide them from the face of an angry God.

The world bore the burden of the despotism of your church until it could be borne no longer. The Reformation ensued; and because God was in it, the combined efforts of popes, emperors, kings, and prelates failed to arrest it. All the elements of superstition, and depravity, and selfishness, and cupidity, and of civil and ecclesiastical power, were moved to their deep foundations, and were combined with unsurpassed skill to suppress it, but in vain. The nations broke the heavy yoke which your church had placed upon their necks, and indignantly cast it away.

And from that day until this, the conflict has continued between Protestantism and Popery—between the law of Christian liberty and of Papal thralldom—between the principles of an open Bible, and the free access of the soul to God through a Mediator, and of a closed Bible, and the religion of sacraments, and ceremonies, and priestly interferences without meaning, measure, or end. It must be confessed, that in this conflict your church has retained its ground with great art and skill, and that after three hundred years of hard fighting it yet is in the field, and with a fearful array. But what is her destiny? Is she to rise again to her former power, and to tread out the liberty of the world, and to send us all to school again to muttering monks, and to open hell to all who decline her authority, and to admit to heaven only those whose great faith or great ignorance receives all that she teaches? Sir, I have no fear of this. I am most firmly persuaded that your church is destined to total extinction. And permit me, in the briefest manner, to state to you a few of the reasons which sustain me in this belief.

1. Your church is incapable of reformation. What may be reformed may be preserved: but the diseased body that allows no purgatives to remove its fever, and no stimulants to quicken its decaying organs, must die. And your church is just such a body. Because infallible, it has

never fallen into error in doctrine or in practice. So that what it once believes and commands is always true, and is always binding. Infallibility forbids reformation. Here, then, is the position which it holds before the world—an infallible church—its sense and nonsense equally true and important—and because infallible, incapable of reformation! And, in my opinion, it is well it is so. This very position will hasten its overthrow. How soon were the waters of the see made the winding-sheet of the Pharaoh that, amid the wonders which were wrought around him, refused to lessen the burdens of Jacob and to let Israel go! Old Baxter was in the habit of saying, "What will not bend must be broken."

2. Even if the doctrine of your church permitted reformation, any reformation is impossible, save that which ends in its extinction. I refer, of course, to a reformation of your *system*, and not to that of individuals. How can your doctrine as to the pope's supremacy be reformed, save by its utter abandonment? How reform your transubstantiation—your purgatory—your penance—your extreme unction—your praying to dead men and women—your relic worship? No reformation of these things is possible. How can they be reformed? If they cannot be, they must be abandoned; and if abandoned, where is your church? Gone, like the fabric of a vision, which leaves not a wreck behind. And again, I

say, it is well that it is so; these things will hasten its overthrow.

3. The intelligence of the world is in opposition to your church. The mind of man, wherever enlightened, and permitted to act freely, is opposed to it. The most enlightened, the most commercial nations, are anti-papal. The literature of the world is against it. The genius of history is revealing its past wickedness; the genius of romance is holding it up to ridicule by its magic creations; the genius of poetry is rehearsing its cruelties in undying song. Nor do I now remember a living apologist for popery out of the ranks of your priesthood, worth naming, save Chateaubriand, whose eloquent work, "*Génie du Christianisme*," is much more of a romance than a serious apology for your system. And all this whilst the historian—the poet—the novelist—the essayist—the penny-a-liner—the grave quarterly—the lighter monthly—the laughing weekly, are out in opposition to it.

4. The prayers and the piety of the world are against it. I assert this as a rule which has its exceptions—exceptions within the pale of your own church, where, I believe, in spite of your system, there are some of whom the world is not worthy. But from tens of thousands of hearts, in every land upon which the sun shines, the prayer is daily ascending to heaven that popish superstition may come to a perpetual end. And God is a prayer-hearing God.

5. The causes which gave rise to your church are rapidly passing away. Popery, you know, for the most part, rose in times of great ignorance. As the art of printing was unknown, the Bible was but little circulated. It required almost a lifetime to transcribe it, and a large fortune to purchase it. Hence your priests could teach almost any thing for divine truth, because the people had no Bible by which to test their teaching. And having enormously multiplied, for doctrines, the commandments of men, it became your settled policy, as far as possible, to suppress the free use of the Bible. This is all over with you; and the Bible will be soon in every living language and among all people. And the ignorance of those ages in which the foundations of your church were laid is passing away. The schoolmaster is going into all the earth; and, with an instructed mind and an open Bible, the priest will not be long endured as a substitute for the preacher, nor the saying of mass for the proclamation of the glorious gospel of salvation. Despotical governments, too, which lent the power of the state to the priest, to assist him in riveting the chains of bondage on the people, are becoming more free. In many nations they have passed, in many more they are passing away. The old feudal system and popery formed the upper and the nether millstone, in the mill in which the people were ground down to the

state requisite to suit your purposes. One of these stones, the feudal system, is broken. It will require all your wits to go on grinding with the other.

In addition to all this, intercourse among the nations is rapidly increasing. By the power of steam the most distant people are made neighbours; and by the application of magnetism the thoughts of men are made travel round the earth, with a velocity far surpassing that of the sun. That stagnation of mind, and of the mass, which is the true element of popery, as of all superstition, is broken up; and at the prospect of a steam engine whistling through Italy on a railway, the papal world is alarmed. And thus the causes which gave rise to your church, and whose continuance for so many ages enabled it to maintain its fearful pre-eminence, are rapidly passing away. It would seem as if, for the last four hundred years, *every thing* was operating against her. The sacking of Constantinople—the discovery of the art of printing, and of the mariner's compass, and of this new world—the Reformation by Luther—the firmness and the weakness of princes—the periods of war and peace—the passing away of old and the rise of new dynasties—the virtues and the vices of popes, prelates, and priests—their learning and their ignorance—bloody and bloodless revolutions—the pragmatic sanction of Charles VII.—the revocation

of the Edict of Nantz, by Louis XIV.—the irruptions of infidelity, and the revivals of true religion, all, all have been directed by the hand of God, so as to weaken the foundations, and as to hasten the desired period of her final fall.

6. And more than all this, it is my strong conviction that God has ordained the total extinction of your church. I will not detain you, Sir, nor my readers, with any dissertations upon the prophecies bearing on this point—this would be aside from my object. John, when wrapt in vision in Patmos, informs us that Babylon “shall be utterly burned with fire,” and calls upon God’s people to “come out of her,” that they might not be partakers of her sins, nor receive of her plagues. And Paul tells us that the Lord shall consume “that wicked” with the spirit of his mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of his rising. And by “Babylon,” and “that wicked,” I believe Paul and John means the papal church. It has already lost its civil power. Once could she dethrone kings, and absolve subjects from their allegiance: now, in a civil point of view, there is no weaker power upon earth. Metternich can send him Austrian troops into the States of the Church without fearing the least injury from the successor of Gregory the Great! How is the mighty fallen! Ronge in Germany, excited to opposition by the holy coat of Treves, has led out one hundred thousand from the yoke

of your church; and all that his Holiness can do is, to bear it. Even in the city of New-York, the resolute Germans are flocking out from the care of Holy Mother; and all that you can do is, to flourish your crook, your keys, and your crosier around the altar of St. Patrick's, without the least power to stop one of the wandering sheep. The temporal power of your church is gone; the spiritual is fast going after it. And the time will soon be here, when the pen of the historian will write, **THE CHURCH OF ROME WAS, BUT IS NOT.**

How this is to be done, is a question of some importance, and upon which I have my own opinions. A careful looking at past providences may cast some light upon the future, and inspire hope or fear, according to the relation we sustain to God and his church. You know, Sir, the way in which God treated Pharaoh, and the Canaanites, and how he blotted out the nations that opposed the progress of his people. You know the way and manner in which he broke up the Jewish church and state, for their opposition to Christ and his church! You know how the Reformation progressed, from small beginnings, until it opened a new epoch in the world's history—from what was considered a little ecclesiastical gildmishership, until kingdoms were shaken—until thrones, cemented by ages, were convulsed and tottered to their base—until hostile armies met in deadly combat, and fattened the earth with the blood of the Papist and the Protestant. God has the control of all agencies to accomplish his will. Much will be done for the extinction of your church by education—much by the general influence of learning—much, very much by

the circulation of the Bible—much more by the simple and fervent preaching of the gospel to the masses, as did Luther—and much by the direct agency of Him, in whose sight the nations are as a drop in the bucket, and who will overturn and overturn, until He shall come whose right it is to reign.

These, Rev. Sir, are in brief my reasons for believing that your church is destined to utter extinction. No reason can be drawn for its future continuance, from its continuance until now. If your people had not been papists, they might have been pagans or infidels. The Canaanites remained a long time in the land to perplex the Jews. Paganism continued for ages in the Roman world, after its conversion to Christianity. Yet both became extinct, save as paganism has been perpetuated by your people. Nor can any argument be drawn from the occasional conversions to your communion which are now occurring. You know that in ages past some Christian ministers relapsed into idolatry; and that during the French Revolution some of your bishops, and many of your priests, went over into infidelity. You must lay no flattering unction to your soul from arguments like these. Your church is opposed to the truth of God—to the people of God—to the will of God. The shed blood of the martyrs is crying to heaven against it. Its extinction is certain; and may God hasten it, in his own time and way.

With the most sincere prayers for your temporal and eternal welfare, I remain, with great respect,

Your fellow-countryman and fellow-sinner,

KIRWAN.

LETTER IX.

To all, and especially to Americans, Roman Catholics.

MY DEAR FRIENDS:—Having addressed a series of letters to one of your most celebrated and excellent bishops in this country, the Right Rev. John Hughes, of New-York, candidly stating the reasons which induced me to abandon the Roman Catholic Church, and which prevent my return to it, I desire, before I lay aside my pen, perhaps never to be resumed on this subject, to address myself to you. And I turn from the bishop to you, for various reasons, some of which I desire in the briefest manner to state.

1. Whilst entirely honest, I believe you to be a people deluded by your priests. They have taken from you the Bible—they forbid you to reason on the subject of religion—they have filled your minds with prejudices against all who resist or question their authority—they have imposed upon you for doctrines the commandments of men—and they have impressed upon you the belief that with them is the power to admit or to exclude you from heaven. In stating these things I say what I do know, and what you know. With me it is no theory, for I have felt it all.

2. I believe you to be a people impoverished and degraded by your priests. The reasons for

my opinion on this subject are stated in the preceding letters. Ignorance being the parent of papal devotion, the priests have shut out from you the light of knowledge. Ignorance begets vice, and vice is the parent of poverty. Or if ignorance begets not vice, it is the rank soil in which superstition attains its most magnificent growth. And which most degrades a people, vice or superstition, it is not worth the while to inquire. I verily believe it impossible to be a true papist without sinking the man.

3. I believe that the papal world need look for no redress of grievances, for no true reformation, from its prelates or priests. The history of the world, and the history of the church, and the principles of human nature, forbid us to entertain the idea. How few and far between, the instances in which depotic kings, or rulers, of their own accord, retrenched their expenditures to relieve the burdens of their subjects, or yielded their usurped rights to increase the liberty of their people. And what of civil liberty the nations possess, has cost the people ages of contest with tyrants, and rivers of blood.

And when have high ecclesiastics ever led the way in salutary reformation? Not at the advent of Jesus Christ. It was the High Priest that sat in Moses' seat, and his subordinates that nailed to the cross the Lord of glory. It was the commission of the high priest to persecute the dis-

senters at Damascus from the order established at Jerusalem, that Saul of Tarsus carried in his pocket, when he was arrested by heaven. The Reformers of the sixteenth century, whom your priests delight to dishonour, but yet who have given civil and religious liberty to the world, were hunted, as by bloodhounds, by the high ecclesiastics of their day. Every religious reform of permanent utility, and in every land upon which the sun shines, has been in consequence of the united action of the people. There occurs not to me now an instance to the contrary.

It is not in human nature to surrender power once possessed—nor to give up a gainful traffic—nor, for the sake of benefiting or enriching the mass, to yield up privileges. Grace leads to many sacrifices to do good to men; but nature holds on to the privileges of order, station, cast, however they may bear upon the people; and if ever the people are freed from them, it must be by their own acts. Roman Catholics! you have nothing to expect from your priests, but the perpetuation of their bad dominion over your mind and conscience; and their vigilant and united efforts to crush every man, and every influence, that would weaken it. The principles of your church forbid its reformation—a true reformation would be the end of it—there is no alternative for you but to abandon it.

These are the reasons, Roman Catholics, why

I turn to you, and why I would implore you, by all that is to be desired in a mind free to think, —in a soul free to love and to act,—free in its access to God without priestly taxes and interferences;—by all that is to be desired in the social and religious elevation of your children, and in the moral regeneration of your race, to rise, and to fling from around you the chains forged in the dark ages, and with which priests would bind you to their footstools in this age of light.

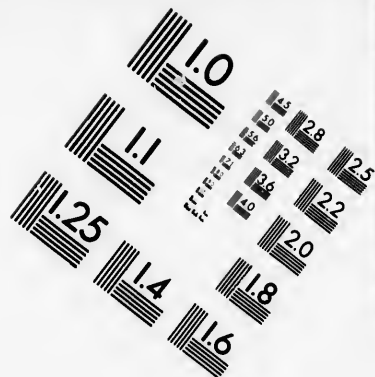
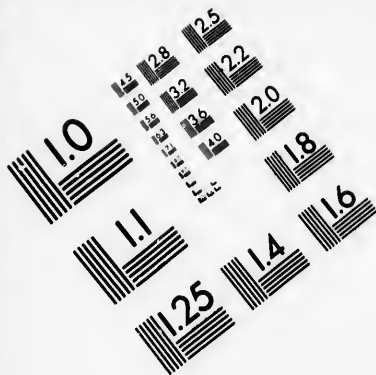
You must remember that your position in these United States is very different from what is that of those yet living in the papal countries of Europe. Here you are free to think, and act for yourselves. In Ireland you might be afraid of the priest's whip, or of his cursing you from the altar. I have seen myself a priest whip a man in the street; and I have heard the same priest curse the same man from the altar. But, here, his whip has no terror, and his curses are harmless.

And, then, as to those of you from Ireland you are in a very different position, as to the Protestant community, from what you were at home. Protestants here are your friends. You are not taxed to support a religion you hate. Your cow or your pig are not driven from your door to pay your tithes. There is nothing here to chafe your mind, or to irritate your feelings, or to give cause to your priests for fiery appeals to your passions. Whatever may be the feelings of wicked men

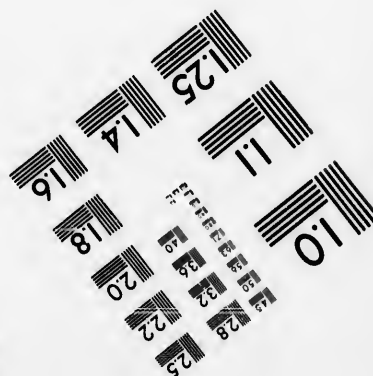
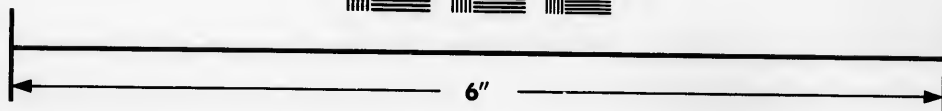
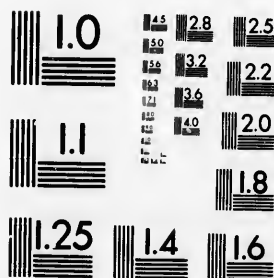
towards you, there is not a pious Protestant in the land that would not do you good, and that would not interpose to protect you from wrong. So that the hostile feelings towards Protestants which had an excuse in Ireland, have no excuse here. If you wish to think for yourselves there are thousands to defend you ;—and if, on examination, you think as I do about popery, and quit the church, you have nothing to fear from priestly anathemas hurled at you, or after you, from the altar ; nor from an ignorant rabble that would persecute you as an apostate.

There is one point, my friends, to which I would direct your special attention. From your cradle you have been taught to regard your priests as possessing peculiar spiritual powers which you resist at you peril. And in every way and form they seek to impress you with the belief that they possess such powers, and that their communication with heaven is beyond that of ordinary mortals. Now this is an old device, and one that is practiced very widely for the purpose of awing the common and vulgar mind. Thus did the ancient priests of Egypt, who taught the people to worship the sun, the cow, the cat, and the snake. Thus do the priests of Brahma at the present day. Some of them, by their pretended intercourse with heaven, have become so holy that the people consider the water in which they wash their feet holy, and seek to





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be sprinkled with it with intense earnestness. The Calmucs believe in a priesthood, all of which is united in Lama, who is absorbed in deity. The old Romans had their priests, and their oracles, that were regarded as knowing and declaring the mind of the gods. Their power over the people was immense. And when pagan Rome became papal it was a point greatly desired to retain the power of the pagan priest over the people in the hands of the papal. It was attained; and it has been retained. And the power claimed by your priests for the better subjecting you to their yoke, is the power claimed by all the priests of heathenism and Mahometanism, and for the very same purpose. It is the claim of fanatics and impostors in all climes and among all people. And whether set up on the banks of the Ganges, or of the Tiber;—on the shores of the Bosphorus, or on the banks of the Hudson, its object is to exalt the priest that he may govern the people. Your priests have no more power with God than any good man in the land,—nor as much, unless they are equally pious. If not pious and sincere, they are simply impostors, who make a living by their traffic in your souls.

Once secure a just and scriptural view of the character of a true minister of Christ, and of the great end of a gospel ministry, and the whole frame-work of popery vanishes. The end of the

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gospel ministry is, to hold up a crucified Christ as God's great remedy for the sins, and guilt, and woes of our race, and so to expound the moral state of the sinner, and the adaptedness of the work of Christ to that state, as to lead him to see that his only hope of life is in the cross, and then to beseech him, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. This being the end of the ministry, a true minister is one, who, with the love of God and of the salvation of men filling his soul, goes out into all the ways which providence opens before him, preaching every where, as did Peter and Paul, "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." He has only one object—to lead men to the knowledge of the truth. He carries no wafers to convert into Christs; he makes no pretensions to the power of regenerating souls by baptizing them; he calls not upon men to confess to him, but to God; he has no unmeaning masses to mutter; no relics to sell; no unmeaning rites to enjoin; no olive oil, or holy salt, or holy water, to drive away demons. He goes out, wearing no sacerdotal garments to astonish the vulgar, with an open Bible to expound it, praying that the Holy Ghost may so apply its truths to the hearts of his hearers that they may be created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works. To those who believe, he administers the rite of baptism; and as God gives him opportunity, he administers the Lord's

supper to the faithful, for the purpose of commemorating the death of Christ, until he comes the second time, without sin, unto salvation. Such were the ministers of Christ before the rise of popery; and such only are the true ministers of Christ now. If so, will you bear the impositions of your priests an hour longer?

There is one other point to which I would direct your special attention, because it is one upon which you have been greatly deceived: I mean the church. Every effort has been put forth by your priests to mystify this topic, and to deceive you in reference to it. All who truly believe in Jesus Christ, and practice the precepts of his word, are reconciled to God. They are adopted into the family of God—they are the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. A connexion of such with any branch of the visible church does not interfere with their connexion with the family of God. No good man is lost, and no bad man is saved, because of their connexion with any church. As a man may be a true Papist and be a Jesuit, or a Jansenist, or a monk of La Trappe, or a shorn friar, so he may be a true Christian, and a member both of the visible and invisible church, and be a Protestant or a Papist, and a member of any of the sects into which they are both divided, which hold to the true atonement of Jesus Christ. But you will ask, Have you no preference for one branch of the church

above another? I have. You ask again, What branch is it? That in which the most truth and the least error, the most simplicity and the least pompousness, exist. Of course, the very last branch I would select would be, the papal; and in the Protestant church, the very last branch I would select is, that which is most like the papal. The true unity of the church is unity in truth, and union in Christ.

Right views of the ministry of Christ, and of the church of Christ, in one hour, blow the whole fabric of popery into the air.

In this appeal to you, Roman Catholics, I am no interested party. It would not be a cent in my pocket if every man of you were to abandon the pope to-morrow; nor will it be a cent out of it if every man of you continue to believe that your priests can turn a wafer into Christ—and regenerate you by baptism—and absolve you from your sins—and get you admission to heaven, by rubbing you with olive oil, when dying. Can Bishop Hughes, or your priests say this? Why, then, you ask, this solicitude about us? On these accounts: I know you to be deceived, and I desire you to be undeceived. I know that you are led to place dependence on rites and ceremonies, for a preparation for the life to come, which give no such preparation. I know that you are robbed of your money, for services that only tend to degrade you—that you are deprived of the dearest rights of man, an open Bible, and free access to God, for yourselves, without any saintly or priestly attorneys to plead for you. I see you hampered and fettered on every hand. By telling the priest every thing you do, you put your peace and liberty into his hands. You cannot read

the Bible without his license, and be a good Catholic. You cannot retain your standing, and read any book which he prohibits, or fail in any duty which he enjoins. You cannot bow your knee before God, with a Protestant, around his family altar, without the terror of a severe penance when you next go to confession. I see you freemen, in a land of freedom, and yet the veriest slave that tread the soil, because your minds and souls are in fetters. I see you a noble people, yielding a degrading homage to men that deceive you, and sustaining, even in your poverty, with a princely liberality, institutions that degrade you. And I desire, with an irrepressible desire, to see you the subjects of the perfect law of liberty with which Christ makes his people free. These, my friends, are the reasons of my solicitude about you.

However I feel towards the system of popery, or towards the priests of the system, there is but one feeling and one desire in my heart towards you: that feeling is one of affection and interest—and that desire is, that you may be emancipated from a system of superstition and spiritual despotism, as degrading and grinding as any that God has ever permitted to exist.

With great respect, yours,

KIRWAN.

LETTER X.

Conclusion. The Indian devotee—Faith in Christ saves—The dying thief—Peter at the feast of Pentecost—The plan of Salvation—The Gospel and Papal way of Salvation contrasted—A call upon Irish Roman Catholics.

MY DEAR FRIENDS:—But a few years since a Christian minister in India, in the pursuit of the objects of his holy mission, met with a Hindoo devotee. A noonday sun was pouring its burning rays from a burning sky, upon the burning sands on which the meeting took place. From its heat the devotee had no protection save the piece of cloth which hung around his loins. He wore a pair of sandals pierced with iron nails, which, at every step, penetrated the muscles and nerves which are so wonderfully collected and interwoven in the soles of the feet. His sandals were filled with his blood, which marked his every footstep. He was an object frightful to behold—his body was blistered by the sun, his hair clotted with filth hanging around his head, his feet swollen, bleeding and painful, almost refusing to move. The missionary asked him why he wore those sandals, and why he subjected himself to such intense suffering? He replied, that he had committed great sins which were greatly offensive to the gods, and that in order to secure the forgiveness of those sins he wore

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those sandals, and cheerfully submitted to all his sufferings.

Filled with compassion for the deluded man, the minister of God told him that he could show him a way in which he could secure the forgiveness of his great sins without those sandals, and without subjecting himself to such terrible sufferings. "Is there such a way, and if so, what is it?" exclaimed the devotee, with the most intense interest. "There is such a way," replied the missionary; and taking his Bible, he read to him and expounded the following passage:—"For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16. He told the poor deluded man of the sins of men—of the love of God in giving his Son to die for the sins of those who should believe on him—of the birth, and sufferings, and death, of Jesus Christ—and he especially dwelt upon this one, great, glorious, and scriptural idea, that he that believes on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. The devotee heard with amazement. He believed. He rejected the false religion of his fathers, though sanctioned by a thousand ages. He renounced subjection to his priests and their traditions. He flung from him his nailed and bloody sandals, by walking in which he supposed he was saving his soul by the tortures of his body. He received Christian bap-

tism at the hands of the man of God that taught him the more excellent way, and lived and died in the faith and hope of the Gospel.

In many respects your circumstances, Roman Catholics, widely differ from what were those of this Hindoo devotee. You live in a land, and in an age of light. You form parts of a great community, which is penetrated in every direction by moral and religious influences. And yet in many respects your circumstances are like unto his. You are deluded by priests—you believe in their ghostly power, and your soul submits to it—you are looking to your confessions, and penances, and austerities, for salvation—you are excluded from the light of the Bible—with all simplicity and honesty you pray to saints, and to the virgin; and perform all that is laid upon you by your father confessor, and in this way, through the religion of the priest, and not through the religion of the Gospel, you hope to get to heaven. But you are deceived. Your hopes are honest, but they are built upon a wrong foundation. It is not by *doing*, or *suffering*, but by *believing*, that we can attain unto the salvation of the soul. "He that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." "He that believeth on the Son hath life." Roman Catholics! my brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, follow, then, the example of the Hindoo devotee. Give up your

beads, and your Agnus Dei—your penances and ritual observances—your crosses, your confessions to men, and your holy water; and go to your Bibles and to the Saviour of the Bible. What all your rites and observances can never accomplish, simple faith in Jesus Christ accomplishes, and in the moment faith fixes itself upon a crucified Christ.

That you may see this clearly, permit me to state to you another incident. When our Lord was put to death, the wicked Jews, the more deeply to degrade him, caused him to be crucified between two thieves. One of these saw, in the convulsions of nature around him, the evidences of the divinity of Him who was hanging by his side on the cross; and whilst his companion in wickedness derided and blasphemed, he cried out from the depths of a convicted and believing soul unto Jesus, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." The following is the reply of the Saviour: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Here, you see, my friends, are no penances—no prayers to saints—no holy water—no olive oil, blessed on Maunday-Thursday—no purgatory; it is simply faith in Jesus Christ, then death, and then paradise, which is only another name for heaven! What was it that opened heaven to this dying thief, and gave him admission to its happy mansions, as one of the redeemed of the Lord? It

was simply faith in Jesus Christ. "He that believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved." And the faith which opened heaven to the dying thief, will open it to you. Faith is the key which opens heaven to your souls, and not baptism, nor the eucharist, nor penance, nor extreme unction. Give up, then, your crosses and your pictures, and your dependence upon saints and sacraments, and go to Jesus Christ for yourselves—with true hearts say, "Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief," and life, eternal life is yours.

That you may see this clearly, permit me to state yet another incident. The Apostle Peter never said a mass in his life—he never changed a wafer into the body and blood of Christ—he never sent a poor sinner to pray to a saint or virgin—he never went into a little box, or a dark room, to hear confession. He was a simple, warm-hearted preacher, and, in his day, labored to impress upon the minds of men these two truths—that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah, and that all that believed in him would be saved. Now, we learn from the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, that Peter preached to the multitudes assembled at Jerusalem to keep the feast of Pentecost, with great power. He mightily convinced them, from the Scriptures, that God had made the Jesus whom they crucified both Lord and Christ. Convicted of their deep sinfulness, by his powerful preaching, and

by the Holy Spirit, multitudes crowd around him, asking, "What shall we do to be saved?" What does he say in reply? Does he tell them to go to confession—or to do penance—or to fast on Lent, or on Fridays? Does he send them to the saints, to ask their intercession? Nothing like this. What, then, does he say? "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." They obeyed; that is, they forsook their sins—they believed in Jesus Christ—they were baptized in his name—and on that occasion three thousand souls were added to the church.

My dear Roman Catholic friends, I once suffered just as you now do, because of my utter ignorance as to the way of forgiveness with God. I was taught all about confession, and confirmation, and penance, and saints' days, and fastings, and holy water, and saying "Hail Mary." I looked upon the priest as the door-keeper of heaven, without whose permission there was no admittance. But I knew nothing about the Bible, and was taught nothing about the work of Christ for the sinner, nor about the work of the Spirit in him. In great mercy, and in the way stated in my letters to Bishop Hughes, I became a reader of the Bible; and to my utter amazement, I found there taught, with perfect plainness, the way of salvation, which the priest had wrapped

up in mystery inextricable. The wayfaring man, though a fool, may understand the way in which a soul may be saved, as taught in the Bible—it is beyond the comprehension of Gabriel, as taught by your priests. Do any of you ask, as did the heathen jailer of Philippi, when terrified by the effects of the crashing earthquake, "What shall I do to be saved?" Permit me, as a friend, who has no object in view but your temporal and eternal good, to place before you what I regard as the scriptural answer to this momentous question,

1. You must feel that you are a sinner, exceedingly, in the sight of God. The Bible teaches us that we are sinners by nature and by practice. It is one thing to believe this—it is another to feel it. You must feel it. No man ever sends for a physician until he feels that he is sick. The people to whom Peter preached never asked what they should do to be saved, until "they were pricked in their hearts."

2. You must feel and know that there is no way of securing the pardon of your sins, but through the redemption there is in Christ Jesus. We are expressly taught, "there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Acts iv. 12. This is an idea that your mind must grasp with all its powers; and which you are in danger of letting slip, because of the way and manner in which you have been instructed, as to the efficacy of sacraments, and priestly manipulations, and ritual observances.

3. You must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the end and the sum of all the instructions of the New Testament to sinners. This is the commandment of God, that ye believe in the name of his Son. Faith brings you into a living union with Christ,

for whose sake alone you are accepted and saved.

Here then, we have the true answer to the question, "What shall I do to be saved?" You must feel that you are a sinner; and you must feel that none but Christ can save you; and in heart and soul you must cordially receive him, as made unto you of God wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. A sense of sin will induce you to seek for its remedy. Christ crucified, bearing the sins of his people in his own body on the tree, is God's remedy for sin. And believing in Christ is the application of the remedy. And believing in Christ, should you die the very next hour, your soul would go, cleansed by his atoning blood, to join the general assembly and church of the first-born in heaven.

Need I stop, ere I close this letter, to place in contrast before you the gospel plan of salvation with the plan of your priests? Must not the contrast strike yourselves, as you read and ponder? You ask what you must do to be saved? The priest tells you to confess—to do penance—to pray to the saints—to keep Lent—to eat no meat on stated days—to go to mass—to torture your body. And when all this is done, when you come to die you must be anointed with olive oil, blessed on Maunday-Thursday. Nor will this do. You have then to go to purgatory, to atone for your venial sins by your own suffering, unless you are bought out by the alms and suffrages of the faithful, in paying for masses for your deliverance! What a long, and complicated, and *expensive* process! And after all, there is no telling the time when the suffrages of the faithful, or the masses of the priests, will secure your deliverance from

purgatorial fires! What a dark and fearful process!

In the face of all this, the gospel declares to you that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin; and that whosoever believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. It offers you a free, a full, a perfect salvation, and without any priestly interferences, and "without money and without price."

Can you hesitate a moment between the plan of the priest and the plan of the gospel? The one debases you as a man—makes you the slave of the priest, and cheats you of heaven: the other addresses you as a moral and intellectual being—sends you to the cross for yourselves—gives you free access to God, and secures for you eternal life.

Irish Roman Catholics! would that I could induce you to look at this great subject in the light of the Bible. It is intimately connected with your temporal and eternal interests, and with the interests of unborn generations. When a boy, I often heard, and never but with burning indignation, of the magistrate, the tool of British power, entering the houses of the Irish suspected of disaffection, and tearing from its frame the speech of Emmet, made in reply to the question of the blood-thirsty judge that tried him, "What he had to say, why the sentence of death should not be passed against him according to law! The British ministry felt that that speech fostered the spirit of freedom in the Irish bosom, and made every man that read it to resolve, at whatever expense, to be free; and they destroyed every copy of it that could be found, and forbade its publication. As my kindred were among the disaffected ones, I felt it to the quick, and so feel it yet. And what, think you, must be my feel-

ings now, in the vigor of my manhood, when I see, in this free land, the descendants of those who fought at Vinegar Hill, and at Tara, permitting individuals calling themselves the priests of the religion of God, to enter their houses and take away their Bibles, and to forbid them, by the terrors of eternity, to think for themselves, on the most important of all subjects connected with their being! It is the very feeling that prompted the British spies to destroy the speech of Emmet; that now prompts your priests to destroy your Bibles. The one fostered the spirit of civil, the other of religious freedom. The British ministry wished to suppress the breathing of your fathers after civil liberty: your priests wish to suppress the breathings of you, their children, after religious freedom. And will you, the sons of noble sires, submit, in a land of freedom, to wear the galling chains of spiritual bondage? Will you submit to have these chains clanking around you to the grave—and when you die to have them bound upon your children, and for no earthly purpose but to sustain a priesthood and a hierarchy, for whose utter overthrow the civil and religious interests of the nations, and the temporal and eternal interests of our race, are calling aloud to heaven?

If so, with a slight variation, mine will be the language of the pious Jeremiah, who had the civil and the religious welfare of his people equally at heart: O that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the blindness and folly of my people.

My letters are ended. I commit them to you, Roman Catholics, and to the blessing of Almighty God.

With great respect, yours,

KIRWAN.

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